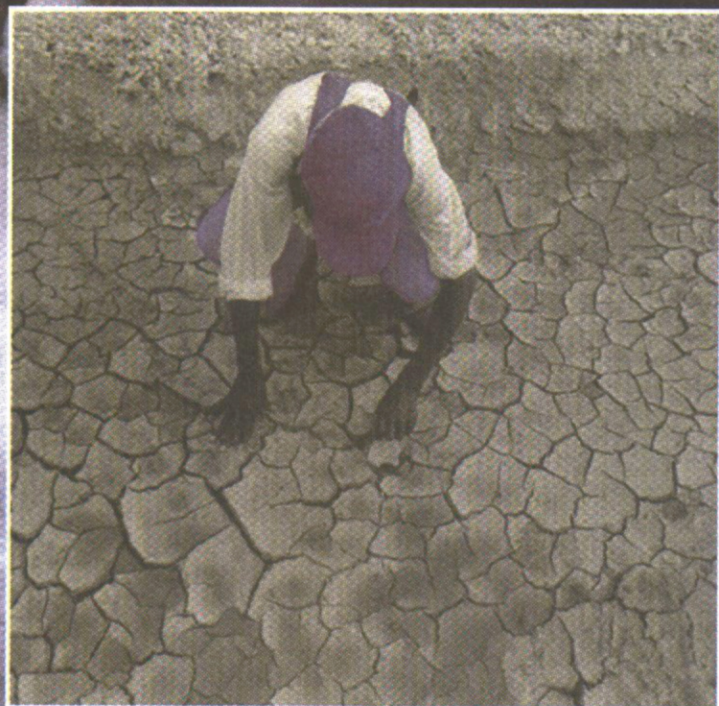


In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

April 17, 2000

DOWN THE DRAIN



**The Coming
World
Water
Crisis**

SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE ENVIRONMENT



\$2.50 Canada \$3.50

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

"... with liberty and justice for all"

James Weinstein
Founding Editor and Publisher

Editor: Joel Bleifuss

Managing Editor: Craig Aaron

Senior Editors: Patricia Aufderheide, David Moberg, Salim Muwakkil

Culture Editor: Joe Knowles

News Editor: Kristin Kolb

Contributing Editors: Terry J. Allen, Linda DeLibero, Barbara Ehrenreich, Laura Flanders, Annette Fuentes, David Futrelle, Juan Gonzalez, Miles Harvey, George Hodak, Doug Ireland, Diana Johnstone, Pete Karman, Chris Lehmann, Scott McLemee, Dave Mulcahey, Jeffrey St. Clair, Jane Slaughter, Jason Vest, Fred Weir, G. Pascal Zachary
Proofreaders: Alan Kimmel, Norman Wishner
Interns: Susie Ochs, Erin Ralston

Art Director: Jim Rinnert

Assistant Art Director: Steve Anderson

Illustrator: Terry LaBan

Publisher: Beth Schulman

Associate Publisher: Julie Fain

Circulation Manager: Luli Buxton

Advertising Director: Steve Anderson

In These Times (ISSN 0160-5992) is published biweekly by the Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, IL and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *In These Times*, 308 E. Hitt St., Mt. Morris, IL 61054. This issue (Vol. 24, No. 10) went to press on March 17, for newsstand sales April 3 to April 17, 2000.

The entire contents of *In These Times* are copyright ©2000 by the Institute for Public Affairs, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher. Copies of *In These Times* contract with the National Writers Union are available upon request. Contact the union at (212) 254-0279 or <http://www.nwu.org>.

Subscriptions are \$36.95 a year (\$59 for institutions; \$61.95 Canada; \$75.95 overseas). Call (800) 827-0270.

All correspondence should be sent to: 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.
Phone: (773) 772-0100. Fax: (773) 772-4180.
E-mail: itt@inthesetimes.com.

Publisher does not assume liability for *unsolicited manuscripts* or material. Manuscripts unaccompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope will not be returned. All letters received by *In These Times* become property of the magazine. We reserve the right to print letters in condensed form.

For back issues and advertising rates, call toll free (888) READ-ITT. Available back issues are \$3 each, \$5 each overseas. Complete issues and volumes of *In These Times* are available from Bell and Howell, Ann Arbor, MI. *In These Times* is indexed in the Alternative Press Index and the Left Index. Newsstand circulation through the IPA International Sales Cooperative. For more information call (415) 447-4284, fax (415) 447-4281, or e-mail monika@bigtoppubs.com.

759-C



Letters

Raising McCain

I'm puzzled why you chose to publish a critique of John McCain written by Pat Murphy, the former editor and publisher of the *Arizona Republic*, the major newspaper in Phoenix and a faithful voice for corporate and Republican Party interests ("Free Ride," March 6). Why should I believe that Murphy, a major player in Arizona Republican politics, is a reasonably accurate observer rather than someone who has biases, scars and an unstated agenda?

David Marshak
Seattle

I rely on *In These Times* for alternative news. Pat Murphy does not belong in your magazine. The author's credentials are not alternative. His former newspaper, the *Arizona Republic* does not have a history of modern thinking in regard to women, minorities, labor unions or environmentalists.

George Lee
Marina Del Rey, California

Your March 6 issue convinces me that I want to keep receiving your magazine. I knew John McCain in Arizona. Glad to see someone sees through him.

Elizabeth Campuzano
Baltimore

Burning Bush

Jeffrey St. Clair has barely scratched the surface ("Cash and Carry" March 6). Our environmental Republican group, Republicans for Environmental Protection, is very concerned about the prospects for the environment in a George W. Bush administration. We are beginning a national campaign to educate the voters about Bush's very poor environmental record (www.repamerica.org).

Meanwhile in Texas, Bush has started to privatize the state parks. One of his advisers, Terry Anderson, plans to sell off all national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, monuments, etc. We have written and asked Bush to assure the American people that he is not even considering such an outlandish proposal. So far: silence.

James Scarantino
Republicans for Environmental Protection
Deerfield, Illinois

After living in Texas for more than 20 years I certainly agree with Jeffrey St. Clair regarding George W. Bush. He is the worst possible choice for president.

That he won the Texas governor's race proves little. This is a state where people tend to vote for familiar names and questionable ethics. In

the past, a complete hack who wasn't even an attorney was elected to the Texas Supreme Court because his name was Ralph Yarbrough, almost the same as a popular ex-senator.

Of course, such antics are common in the South. For 40 years after the rule of the Kingfish in Louisiana, virtually anyone named Long could be elected to almost anything. After Huey was governor, Russell was a congressman for decades, and even brother Earl was elected governor at a time when he could hardly walk away from a bar without help.

Of course, no mention of Texas politics is complete without a nod toward Landslide Lyndon. LBJ received an early boost in his political career by winning a race with a margin of just a few votes. When the election was investigated, many of those who voted resided at an identical address, a cemetery in an obscure south Texas county.

Patrick R. Connell
Miami

Evil of Two Lessers

Thank you for mentioning Ralph Nader ("Gush vs. Bore," March 6). As a former political volunteer (beginning as a child working for RFK), I've stopped supporting "Democratic" organizations that are not democratically run. With Jimmy Carter, people should have learned that voting for the "lesser of two evils" still leaves us with elected officials that don't move us forward.

Bob Burgess
Columbus, Ohio

Why Vote?

I am pretty sure that that in the 2000 elections the percentage of eligible voters who will go to vote will decrease once again ("Vanishing Voters," March 6). And it is no surprise at all.

The vast majority of Americans support the United Nations, are in favor of protecting the environment and support the nuclear test ban treaty. Our senators and representatives have consistently voted in the other direction, favoring the financial interests of the industries who are the world's main polluters and the corporations involved in the manufacture and sale of weapons. I don't see any use in voting since my senators and representatives have not been my true representatives on Capitol Hill. These recipients of huge political contributions from the big corporations will continue to legislate in accordance with the greedy corporate agenda.

Louis Brandeis could say today, without any risk of being wrong: "We have a society with huge concentrated wealth in the hands of a few."

Rene Espinosa Sr.
Falls Church, Virginia

In These Times

Volume 24, Number 10

April 17, 2000

www.inthesetimes.com

2 The First Stone

By Joel Bleifuss

4 Editorial

5 News

Stupid Tuesday, what working women want, Randall Terry acts up, Phil Gramm's day in the sun and Henry Kissinger's new job.

6 Appall-o-Meter By David Futrelle

13 Profile By Kari Lydersen

Socialist presidential candidate David McReynolds.

Special Report on the Environment

14 David Brower's Last Charge

By Jeffrey St. Clair
Taking out Glen Canyon dam.

18 Down the Drain

By Jim Motavalli
The coming world water crisis.
Plus: Bolivia's water war zone.

21 Rivers of Cyanide

By Jason Vest
Mining disasters the media miss.

23 Spliced and Diced

By Karen Charman
America pushes Frankenfoods.

25 How To Deal with Gore

By Jeffrey St. Clair and Lois Marie Gibbs
Love him or leave him?

27 Full Metal Racket

By Bill Boisvert
BOOKS: The Vietnam War's new apologist.

31 Horror Show

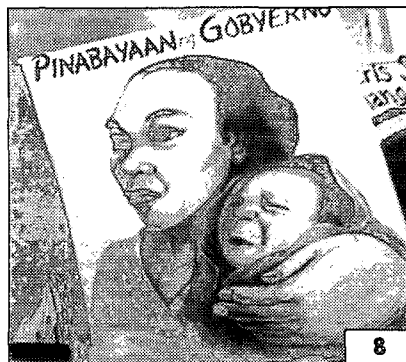
By Roane Carey
BOOKS: *Without Sanctuary*.

32 Spinning Wheels

By Joshua Rothkopf
FILM: Brian De Palma gets lost in space.

38 Scary Kid Stuff

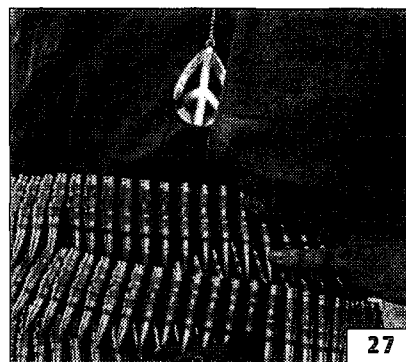
By Beth Birnbaum



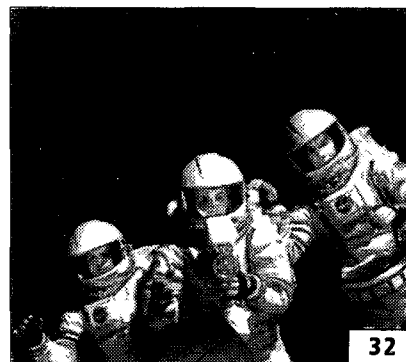
8



23



27



32

The Big Stick Approach

The European Union quietly holds corporations accountable

With little fanfare and no notice in the U.S. media, Europe is fomenting an environmental revolution. Inspired by a concept known as "extended producer responsibility," the European Union is drawing up regulations that require corporations to change their environmentally wasteful ways.

In the near future, the European Union will hold any company that enters the European market responsible for the environmental impacts of its products. New regulations will force manufacturers to change product design, the kinds of materials used in manufacturing and how products are disposed. American corporations, none too pleased with this government interference, have enlisted the aide of the Clinton administration to waylay these green proposals.

Extended producer responsibility, or EPR, got its start in Germany in 1991, when the Christian Democratic government, responding to citizen concerns about the scarcity of landfill sites, passed a law requiring manufacturers to take back and recycle all packaging materials, boxes, cans and bottles. Within two years, 12,000 companies, many of them U.S.-based, were participating in an industry-funded recycling program, which shifted the costs of managing packaging waste from taxpayers to the waste producers. It was wildly successful. Holland soon followed suit, as did Sweden, France, Austria, Finland, Spain and Belgium. Now the European Union is finalizing legislation that will standardize EPR for packaging across its 15 member states.

EPR is not just an Old World thing. In Canada, seven of the 10 provinces have adopted an EPR system that requires producers to take responsibility for beverage-container waste. As a result, these provinces have achieved a recovery rate for beverage containers that far exceeds that in most American states.

The beauty of EPR is that by putting the financial burden on companies for the environmental impacts of products throughout their life cycle, industry has a natural economic incentive to act in an environmentally responsible manner. When properly regulated, the market does work. Writing in *Beverage Industry* magazine, E. Gifford Stack of the National Soft Drink Association, describes EPR as "a big stick approach." "Because the stick delivers a pretty good financial whack," he notes, "producers also have a financial incentive to design their products to make less waste."

EPR has failed to take hold in the United States, in large part because the Clinton administration has done everything it can to block it. The President's Council on Sustainable Development, established in 1993 to examine ways to encourage environmentally sustainable growth, held heated discussions about EPR. But in its proposed program the council's industry-



By Joel Bleifuss

dominated task force substituted "product" for "producer." Under the council's scheme of "extended product responsibility," as spelled out in its 1996 report, "Sustainable America: A New Consensus," "Manufacturers, suppliers, users and disposers of products share responsibility for the environmental effects of products throughout their life cycle." This entirely voluntary program will cost corporations nothing and achieve little—just what the K Street lobbyists ordered.

Despite the best efforts of the Clinton administration, the concept of extended producer responsibility is spreading. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an association of the world's most developed economies, is promoting EPR as a "promising new public policy tool" that could "minimize waste by transferring substantial or complete financial (and physical) responsibilities to private enterprises for managing their products at the post-consumption phase." Ignoring protests from the United States, the OECD is drawing up guidelines on how countries can best implement EPR policies.

At a December 1998 OECD conference on EPR, Clare Lindsay, head of the Environmental Protection Agency's extended product responsibility project, said the United States "stresses collaboration and partnerships over command and

American corporations have enlisted the Clinton administration to help waylay the European Union's green proposals.

control." "We have a different philosophy here," she noted, "[which] acknowledges that producers play a central role in reducing the environmental impacts of their products, but recognizes that they can not always do this alone."

Of course, U.S. corporations could take such responsibility, they just don't want to bear the cost. And the EPA and other branches of government are doing what they can to make sure that they won't have to. "We are not going to simply follow in the footsteps of Europe," Elizabeth Cotsworth, acting director of EPA's Office of Solid Waste, told a May 1999 conference on EPR.

But this is the global economy, and any American-based multinational that wishes to do business in the European Union must first conform to its standards. Consequently, EPR in Europe is already forcing U.S. companies to assume environmental responsibility for their products.

For instance, in February the European Union passed EPR regulations on vehicles, against the wishes of the world automakers. By 2006, vehicles sold in Europe must contain no heavy metals, such as lead, mercury or cadmium, and be manufactured from recyclable materials. In addition, automakers

will be held responsible for final disposal of the car. This is good news for the U.S. environment, says Charles Griffith of the Clean Car Campaign, a coalition operating out of the Ecology Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan. "Europe is driving this and Japan is following fairly closely on what Europe is doing," he says. "Consequently, U.S. companies are basically gearing up to meet the European requirements. It will be hard to come up with separate designs for the European and U.S. markets, so the U.S. automakers are going to seek to meet the European Union phaseouts across the board."

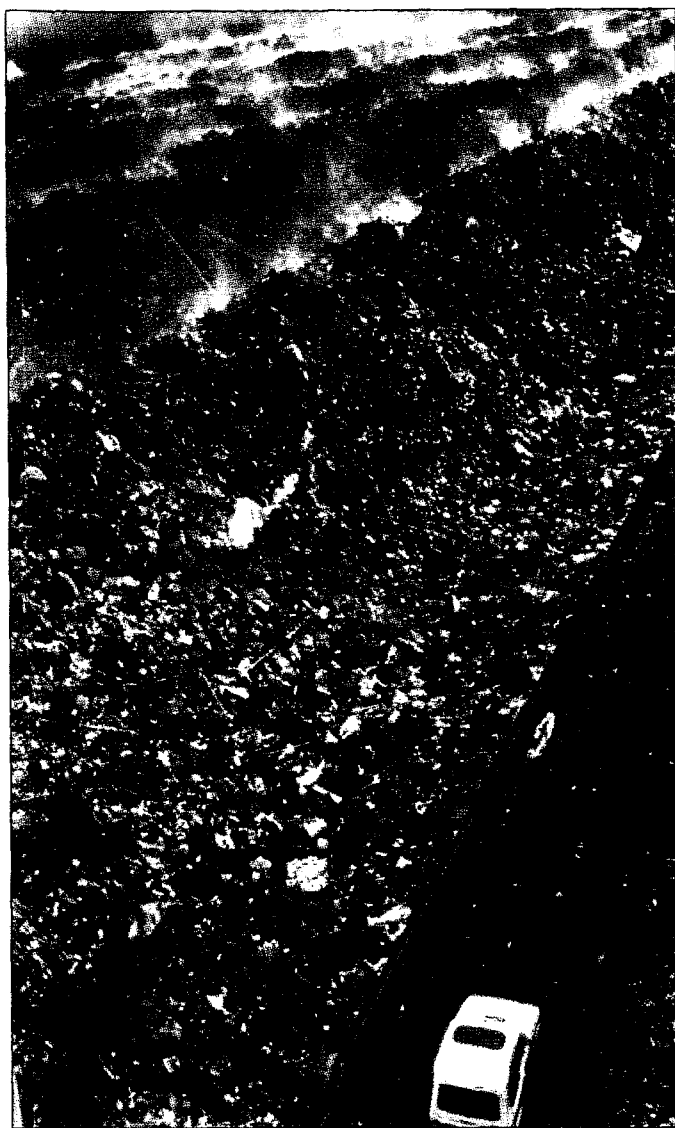
Understanding that EPR threatens the corporate bottom line, the office of the U.S. Trade Representative has teamed up with U.S. business interests to attack Europe's EPR regulations as unfair trade practices. The current battle focuses on E.U. plans to implement EPR regulations for all products that contain electrical circuits. The proposal, known as Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), would phase out the use of toxic metals (lead, cadmium, mercury) in the production of consumer items like refrigerators and desktop computers, require products to contain a certain percentage of recycled material, set design standards that would allow computer equipment to be more easily upgraded, and generally make the manufacturers of that equipment assume financial and legal responsibility for their products throughout their entire life cycle.

The Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition is spearheading support for WEEE in the United States through its Clean Computer Campaign. The campaign is focusing on holding producers responsible for clean product design and pushing them to take back computers at the end of their life. The coalition is taking their cue from Sweden, which has been the leader in implementing legislation to apply EPR to computer manufacturers. Mans Lonnroth of the Swedish environment ministry observed in 1997, "The product developers of electronic products are introducing chemicals on a scale which is totally incompatible with the scant knowledge of their environmental or biological characteristics."

The Toxics Coalition's literature notes that computers are made from more than 1,000 materials, many of them highly toxic, including chlorinated and brominated substances, toxic gases, toxic metals, acids, plastics and plastic additives. Yet an estimated 75 percent of all computers ever purchased in the United States are currently stored in people's attics and basements. By 2004, there will be an estimated 315 million obsolete computers in the United States, most of them will be destined for landfills or incinerators. Already, consumer electronic products account for about 40 percent of lead found in landfills, where it can leach and contaminate drinking water supplies.

A number of trade associations, led by the American Electronics Association (whose members include Microsoft, IBM, Motorola and Intel), and including the American Plastics Council, the International Cadmium Association and the Lead Industries Association, are adamantly opposed to WEEE. They lobbied the Clinton administration for help, and the administration was happy to oblige.

U.S. opposition to the WEEE environmental initiative is spelled out in a November 1998 cable, leaked to the Toxics Coalition, sent by State Department economist Jonathan Mudge (at the behest of the U.S. Trade Representative) to



The European Union is making sure corporations waste not. the U.S. Mission in Brussels. Mudge instructed all embassies in E.U. capitals to "highlight U.S. concerns about the draft directives."

Providing a list of talking points, Mudge suggested that U.S. diplomats explain that "imposing the entire cost of taking back and recycling electrical products on the manufacturer" poses an undue burden on corporations. "This expense could be shared with municipalities and other actors," he wrote. "We urge [the European Union] to work with industry and other interested parties to devise a more efficient, less trade restrictive approach to meet its goals."

The European Union is unlikely to cave in to U.S. pressure to abandon EPR. What's more, U.S. actions contradict the professed intentions of Clinton, who, in a March 15, 1999, address to a WTO symposium on trade and the environment, said, "We must do more to ensure that spirited economic competition among nations never becomes a race to the bottom. We should be leveling environmental protections up, not down."

But like so much of Clinton's lofty rhetoric, his words are belied by his actions. ■

Turn of the Screw

By David Moberg

Central African forests that once echoed with the sounds of wildlife are now filled with a "remorseless silence," *Chicago Tribune* correspondent Paul Salopek reported recently. "It is the silence of nature drowned out by the babble of human overpopulation," he wrote of his recent journey to Cameroon, describing roads penetrating once-pristine forests and local hunters peddling "bush meat" in the cities.

The worldwide threat to wildlife and ecosystems that support them is increasingly catastrophic. Since the industrialized countries have obliterated many of their wild places, most of the last great spans of wilderness are located in less-developed countries. While the chainsaws of industrial loggers and the machinery of miners and oil drillers account for much of the damage in the remaining forests, poor people—desperate for land—wreak havoc as well.

But the problem is less the "babble of human overpopulation" than the brutality of the global economic system that entraps countries like Cameroon. This cage—a combination of national debt peonage and free-market fundamentalist policies—destroys human lives as assuredly as it wipes out plants and wildlife, often pitting the most exploited people against the environment.

Cameroon became entrapped when it sank deeper in debt as the price of its oil exports dropped sharply after 1982. It turned for help in 1988 to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which loaned money but demanded policies that led to currency devaluation, budget cuts, privatization of public services and widespread hardship. Under the IMF regime, meager education spending stagnated, incomes declined and the debt burden more than doubled. Cameroon was classified as a Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC).

In 1994 the IMF pushed Cameroon to rapidly accelerate its timber exports. The number of logging enterprises nearly doubled within a year, and lumber exports grew by 50 percent in the following year. The forests were devastated, but the policies didn't help relieve debt: World lumber

prices were dropping, partly because other countries were boosting their logging exports, often under IMF pressure.

Cameroon's experience was not an anomaly. Although the HIPC designation was part of a plan to boost these national economies, in most cases HIPCs' debt burdens increased, spending on education and health declined, poverty worsened and the environment was ravaged. A Friends of the Earth analysis of U.N. data shows that the loss of forest was 50 percent greater in HIPCs.

Like many countries, Cameroon was sending more money back to rich coun-

tries than they were getting in aid: In 1996, according to the debt-relief group Jubilee 2000, Cameroon paid out \$2.20 in debt service for every dollar it received in grants. Debt service is now 6 percent of GNP, more than education and health spending combined.

The brutal global economic system pits the most exploited people against the environment.

The rich countries have begun to reduce or write off some of the HIPC debt and have proposed that conditions for future

loans be more development-oriented. But the process is moving much too slowly. And there is little indication that rich countries are willing to try a new approach that focuses on balanced and sustainable development rather than the quick-fix export of raw materials. Even worse, according to Jubilee 2000, of the 36 HIPCs that were supposed to benefit from a debt relief initiative agreed upon last year, 15 will actually pay more in debt service after they finish going through the HIPC process than they do now.

World Bank President James Wolfensohn has called debt cancellation a "whimsical" idea that would "screw up the market." Yet pursuing the payment of debts from these countries is criminal, "screwing up" the lives of a billion people and devastating the environment. Debt

cancellation is a first step toward reviving the economies of these nations in ways that raise living standards and protect ecosystems. The protests at the IMF/World Bank spring meetings this April in Washington will reinforce that message, which has growing support across the political spectrum. For environmentalists, the protests should also be a reminder that it will be impossible to prevent the awful silencing of the forests without first fighting for social justice and new rules for the global economy. ■

Terry LaBan



Left Out

After Super Tuesday,
progressives mull over
missed opportunities

By Hans Johnson

WASHINGTON—March 7 was supposed to be a lucky day for opponents of California's Proposition 13. Since 1978, the notorious anti-tax initiative has jinxed plans for everything from reclamation of wetlands to public school construction. In this spring's primary, through a well-crafted counterattack called Proposition 26, opponents meant to overturn a key portion of the policy.

Spurred on by tales of crumbling and overcrowded classrooms, Prop 26 aimed to reduce the threshold for passage of local school funding measures from an almost unattainable 67 percent supermajority to the usual standard, more than 50 percent. Steering the pro-26 campaign was a broad coalition of teachers' unions and Bay Area business leaders. Pre-primary surveys showed the proposal headed for passage.

But on election day, California voters threw progressives a curve ball. Impaired by high turnout from conserv-

atives, Prop 26 failed by a narrow margin. Rejection of the measure was among a series of setbacks for liberals across the country.

Sixteen states and U.S. territories held primaries on so-called Super Tuesday, and six more Southern states weighed in one week later. While the most telling results came from California, voters in other states offered insights for trends to watch for in the fall. Progressives have their work cut out for them in generating turnout if they hope to win some closely contested House seats and gain congressional control.

If any region is a bellwether, it's the Midwest. In Ohio, Republican Mike DeWine, a first-term senator seeking re-election this year, has been seen as especially vulnerable in Democratic calculations. But on March 7, DeWine managed to capture over a million votes in a hotly contested GOP primary vote. His leading foe, Ted Celeste, captured less than 400,000 votes in a tight four-way Democratic race. Overall, Republican voters outnumbered Democrats 3 to 2, a reassuring augur for DeWine as he heads toward November.

Ohio also played host to a closely watched congressional primary, testing the ability of Democrats to rein in one of



DAVID MCNEW/NEWSMAKERS

Time to regroup.

their own and put their strongest horse forward this fall. Eight-term Rep. James Traficant, who peppers his floor speeches with *Star Trek* references, is beset by legal troubles and often casts his lot against his own party. But on March 7, a left-leaning coalition of disgruntled constituents came up short in a bid to topple Traficant. The inability to clear the field

Who's the Boss?

Religious-right mogul James Dobson, president of a \$110-million non-profit group called Focus on the Family, has become a major player in national politics, invoking God to urge voters to support initiatives he favors, including anti-same-sex marriage Proposition 22 on the California's March 7 primary ballot.

Known best for his nationwide radio broadcasts offering stern advice on child-rearing, Dobson has lately become a much-feared kingmaker in Republican politics. In February, when John McCain denounced the "evil" politics of the religious right, he was careful to heap praise on Dobson. Such courtesy is hardly mutual. Dobson went to bat for George W. Bush by decrying McCain over his temperament and lapses in a past marriage "reminiscent of the man who now occupies the White House." For Dobson, touting family values doesn't mean playing with kid gloves.

In the week before the vote on Prop 22, Focus sent a letter to pastors statewide enclosing a "Church Bulletin Insert," which supported the measure, saying chaos would ensue without it. "Any person, of any age, could marry anyone he wished or any number of persons he wished—a close relative, three young children, etc. Were there no restrictions on marriage, the possible arrangements would be endless." Another Focus missive warned ministers that "Powerful interests are making a determined effort to challenge God's design for marriage" and told them "to urge their congregations to get out and vote 'Yes' on Proposition 22."

The group's heavy engagement in ballot measure campaigns like Prop 22 strains the legal limit. Last year, the IRS pulled the tax exemption status of the Christian Coalition amid allegations that it intervened in partisan races. Focus

has so far avoided that pitfall, yet its tax-exempt status forbids "substantial" involvement in ballot measures, or spending more than 5 percent of its budget on such bids.

Dobson's tactics make determining the group's electoral involvement difficult. Although his group has risen on the strength of literally millions of small-dollar donations for everything from audio tapes about abstinence to books about overcoming illness, by weighing in through letters, church meetings and bulletin inserts, Dobson flies below radar and avoids having to disclose Focus contributions to state campaign-finance monitors.

Buoyed by largess from Dobson, boosters of Prop 22 won handily at the polls, 61 to 39 percent. A similar referendum appears likely in Nevada this November, and Focus is poised to wade into that campaign as well. **HJ.**

of other challengers may leave the seat ripe for GOP picking in the fall against a weak incumbent.

Likewise, in the race for an open seat vacated by nine-term Republican Rep. John Kasich, the numbers were not encouraging for progressives. Maryellen O'Shaughnessy captured the Democratic nomination in a cakewalk. But Republican voters, who gave their nod to Pat Tiberi, outnumbered their competitors at the polls by more than 2 to 1, suggesting the GOP will keep the seat.

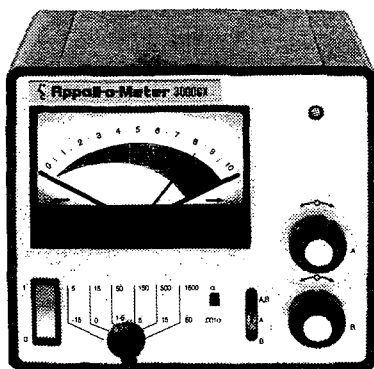
Two weeks of heavy primary campaigning concluded on March 14 with balloting across the South. Because George W. Bush and Al Gore had already stolen any suspense from the

vote-counters by nailing down their parties' top spots, some called the event "Stupid Tuesday." In backhand fashion, however, voters did offer a gauge to Democrats of how much McCain's absence had depressed GOP turnout—and possibly improved Gore's chances in the fall. Republicans had accounted for 63 percent of voters in Washington state balloting on Feb. 29 and, on March 7, outnumbered Democrats by more than 2 to 1 in Georgia. One week later, however, Democratic turnout actually exceeded that of Republicans in Louisiana and Oklahoma, two states that figure prominently on Bush's electoral roadmap.

Yet in another clear signal that voter anxiety about youth criminals remains ripe for exploitation, Californians gave sweeping approval to Prop 21, the "Gang

Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention Act." Through a get-tough plan mirroring a blueprint by former Gov. Pete Wilson, the proposal would prosecute many adolescent offenders as adults.

Despite the disappointments, balloting did include a few bright spots for progressives. While Californians were rejecting Prop 26—and approving Prop 22, a closely watched measure banning same-sex marriages—Democratic voters in a Los Angeles-area district gave a primary win to labor ally Hilda Solis. She will replace nine-term Rep. Matt Martinez, who had irked liberal leaders by backing Prop 22 and opposing some abortion-rights measures. And, in a Silicon Valley district watched as a political barometer, voters seemed poised to replace U.S. Rep. Tom Campbell, a Republican, with Democrat Mike Honda in the fall.



Appall-o-Meter

By David Futrelle

Shoot the Vote 9.1

Mark Detro, an Oklahoma motel owner and Republican congressional candidate, has taken attack politics to a new level with a plan to give guns to some of his luckiest supporters. Detro recently announced a plan to raffle off Ruger guns, helpfully donated by Massachusetts gun broker Guns Are Us, to supporters giving \$5 or more to his campaign. "We're seeing in Oklahoma an erosion of our firearms rights," Detro told *The Associated Press*. "This is a great way for people to get involved with a political issue."

Detro, who also happens to be facing assault and battery charges for allegedly bashing a local man on the head with a metal pipe (he claims self-defense), contends that the Oklahoma attorney general has given a thumbs up to the plan; a spokesman for the attorney general says otherwise.

Finders Fee 7.4

If you find a pile of cash sitting in the middle of the street, you are supposed to report it to the police. Unless you're a

policemen: Then it's finders keepers. This is the contention, in any case, of Pennsylvania attorney D.C. Nokes Jr., representing Conemaugh Township police officer William Richards, who just "happened" to find \$20,000 in cash lying in the snow near where an apparently drunk motorist had decided to park his car, *USA Today* reports. The motorist claims he accidentally threw the money out of the car along with beer cans he was trying, unsuccessfully, to hide from police; Nokes argues that, since they put their "lives on the line" every day, police should be allowed to keep whatever they find while on duty. The court has decided that neither man should get the money, which has been earmarked for the state treasury; both men have appealed the decision.

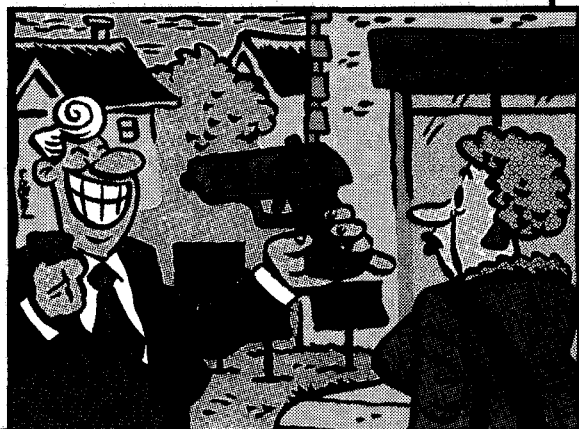
System Failure 5.2

Matthew Broderick, or at least his character in *War Games*, may have been able to play "global thermonuclear war" just fine on a computer that would be considered a dinosaur by today's standards. But the software engineers at Apple

apparently are concerned that their comparatively turbocharged Mac OS 9 software might not be up to the task.

Looking through its software licensing agreement, *Forbes* columnist Stephen Manes discovered that Apple expressly disclaims all responsibility for any damage that might result were the software to be used for "the operation of nuclear facilities, aircraft navigation, communications systems, or air traffic control machines, in which case the failure of the Apple software could lead to death, personal injury, or severe physical or environmental damage."

Better stick to word processing and Web browsing, where the chances of serious injury are much slimmer.



Still, the failure of the school-funding measure in California seemed to leave many progressive activists a little flustered about the month's primary proceedings. In the wake of the vote, Gale Kaufman, the Prop 26 campaign manager who in 1998 masterminded the come-from-behind bid to defeat the anti-union "paycheck protection" initiative, pointed fingers at Gov. Gray Davis, who looked on as others struggled to undo the straitjacket on state spending.

Teachers, parents and some business leaders eager to improve California schools are discussing an initiative similar to Prop 26 they may place on the November ballot, in hopes that the wave of conservative-leaning voters who flooded the polls on March 7 will abate. The outcome of balloting this spring had California progressives, like their counterparts elsewhere, looking for second chances in the fall. ■

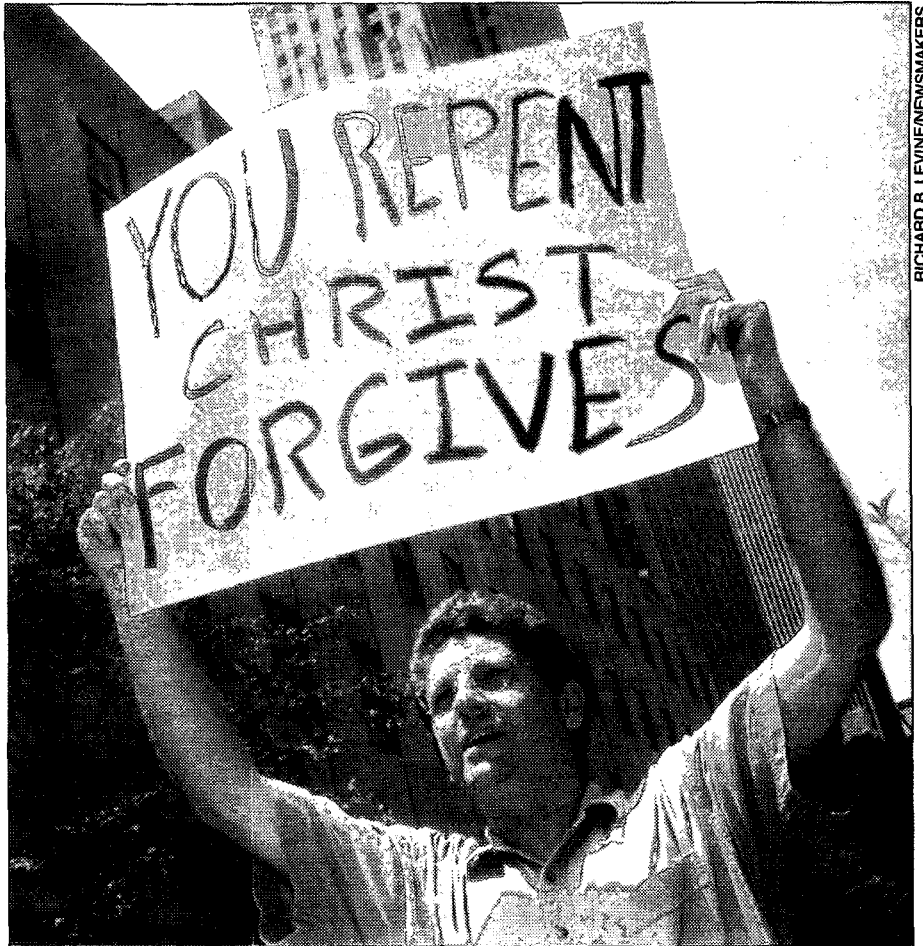
Devil Inside

Randall Terry is driving Vermont Republicans into the arms of liberals

By Hans Johnson

Even as invective poured from his mouth in Vermont, Randall Terry felt his ears burning. Earlier this year, the failed New York congressional candidate and founder of the all-but-defunct Operation Rescue arrived in the land of Ben and Jerry to protest a December state Supreme Court ruling endorsing same-sex marriage. Since then, however, Terry has been tagged by Congress for questionable behavior, rebuked by his own pastor for recent marital missteps, and accused of using the Green Mountain State as a backdrop in his own political theater of the absurd. All of this has greatly complicated Terry's makeover from anti-abortion extremist to anti-gay crusader—and highlighted the virtue deficit in the ranks of the Christian Right.

Though hawking a new issue, Terry has retained his trademark gift of gab. Same-sex nuptials, he lectured his New



RICHARD B. LEVINE/NEWSMAKERS

Randall Terry, founder of the extreme anti-choice group Operation Rescue, is now aiming his religious crusade at same-sex marriage.

England hosts, should make them "vomit." And since homosexuality is just like "bestiality," he told the *Rutland Herald*, what's to bar weddings between "a man and a sheep?" He was divinely summoned to Vermont, Terry insists, to elevate "a theocentric view of marriage"—and to intimidate allies of gay rights facing re-election in November.

The state court's verdict cannot be appealed, leaving legislators to hash out the details. While a few staunch liberals have dug in their heels to defend same-sex marriage, many legislators now back a plan to grant recognition of the nation's first statewide civil unions, more sweeping even than domestic partnerships. Terry aims to quash both.

Fat chance, say those now fashioning the civil-union bill. "Like it or not, the Constitution is not based on the Old Testament," says Republican state Rep. Tom Little, chair of the Judiciary

Committee. Cribbing a line from the state court ruling, Little told the *Los Angeles Times* that same-sex couples "are families, and they are entitled to the rights and protections of the Constitution."

Vermont Republicans' attempt to usher Terry out of the state underscores his skill for driving even conservatives into the arms of moderates and liberals. As with his anti-abortion tactics, Terry's anti-gay schtick lends credence to his critics' case for greater legal safeguards from intolerance. With gay-rights foes stuck doing damage control over Terry's credibility gap, his arrival in the state seems the answer to many a progressive's prayer.

In early February, Terry's name came up during congressional debate on bankruptcy reform. Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) offered an amendment to stop people facing fines or penalties for blocking abortion clinics from using bankruptcy as an escape



A Global Call for Women's Rights: More than 1,000 Philippine women and girls marched to Manila's Presidential Palace on March 7 to draw attention to a growing women's health crisis. Thousands of Philippine women die each year from problems due to unwanted pregnancies and domestic violence. A study by the Philippine Department of Health found that 95 percent of abortions are conducted illegally—many result in death. Protesters also demanded the resignation of President Joseph Estrada. A former action movie hero who has fathered several children out of wedlock, Estrada has a dismal record on women's rights. The demonstration was held in conjunction with International Women's Day, and similar events were held from Los Angeles and Belgrade to Kathmandu and Rabat.

hatch. As Schumer noted, Terry is Exhibit A among such clinic-blocking scofflaws, owing \$1.6 million in judgments to women's groups. Yet in November 1998, he filed for bankruptcy just after having raised thousands of dollars in campaign contributions during his ill-fated bid for a U.S. House seat that same year. Schumer's motion sailed through 80 to 17.

Terry's legal and financial scrapes weren't the only matters making headlines this winter. The press also picked up on a scolding from Daniel J. Little, Terry's longtime minister and leader of the Landmark Church in Binghamton, New York (no relation to the Vermont legislator). In a sharply worded censure letter, Little alleges that Terry has abandoned his wife, Cindy, and their two kids, faulting him for a "pattern of repeated and sinful relationships and conversations with both single and married women." In charging that the censure is "invalid," Terry nonetheless admits to fraying ties

with his family, telling the *Washington Post*, "My marriage problems are personal, painful and private."

Given Terry's image problems, even erstwhile allies in religious circles are urging him to call off the dogs in Vermont. Among Catholics, Bishop Kenneth Angell of Burlington told reporters that the "diocese is in no way affiliated or supportive of Mr. Terry's campaign against same-sex marriage." Even the leading anti-gay group in the fray over marriage, Take It to the People, says that Terry and his handful of followers "do not bring anything positive" and "will only dilute and damage" the process of deliberating policies that respond to the Vermont Supreme Court ruling.

In early March, two key committees in the state House of Representatives approved a civil-union bill, which avoids the word "marriage," but would enshrine for gay couples many of the rights that marriage grants to straight couples. "The design of the bill, we

hope, is to create a situation where there's no material difference between [civil unions and marriage] and therefore no constitutional difference between the two," says Little.

During a series of subsequent town meetings, citizens generally gave a thumbs-down to same-sex marriage, but were mixed on the civil-union alternative. In the legislature, the civil-union strategy is also working. On March 15, the state House voted 79-68 to send the bill forward for a final vote.

If legislators go ahead with the civil-union bill—and Gov. Howard Dean signs it, as he has signaled he would—the state will have crossed a political snake pit. Since 1994, 31 states and the federal government have passed laws to block gay marriages. And voters in three states—Alaska, Hawaii and California—have amended their state constitutions in

response to lawsuits by same-sex couples seeking marriage certificates.

In Vermont, however, Terry's visibility—and volume—have stolen the thunder from the pious conservatives who have led anti-gay drives elsewhere. Rather than an anti-gay backlash at the polls, Vermont legislators fear an anti-incumbency wave as citizens express impatience at the batch of lawmakers if they miss their chance to craft a speedy resolution to the Supreme Court ruling. Such inaction, says Richard Sears, a Democrat who chairs the Judiciary Committee in the state Senate, "is a liability for any incumbent."

The civil-union bill might also become a campaign-trail guidepost for uneasy gay allies like Al Gore, who supports some aspects of same-sex marriage but shuns the name. If the bill does become state law, gay marriage advocates can thank not only the spirit of civility and tolerance that has governed the debate. They might also throw a bouquet to Randall Terry. ■

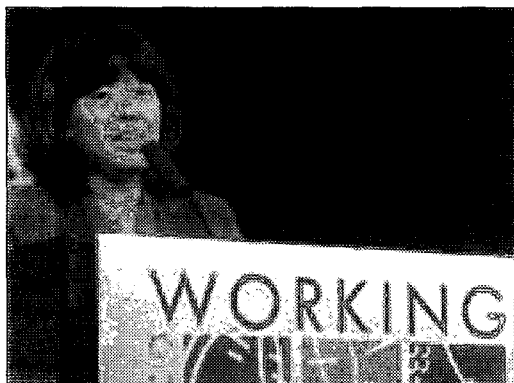
What Women Want

Working women's votes could seal Al Gore's fate. But is he listening to them?

By David Moberg

CHICAGO—Kim Hayward, a veteran waitress in Chicago, knows without hesitation what she wants candidates to address in this year's campaigns. "Health care," she says. "If you're poor, you can get it, and if you're rich, you can afford it. I've worked off and on for 20 years and still don't have it."

But Hayward is disappointed with all the presidential candidates. "They're



Indonesian union leader Dita Sari was imprisoned for calling a strike in her country.

not focused on real life, like the minimum wage, paying people enough to live," she says.

Hayward is typical of many working women, according to a survey released by the AFL-CIO in conjunction with a conference of about 5,000 unionized women held here in March. More than four-fifths of working women surveyed expressed strong interest in solutions to basic economic issues—pay, health care, Social Security, pensions and paid leave—to deal with family needs. Many of these issues could influence the votes of working women and men. The big question is whether the presidential candidates—Al Gore in particular—will pay much attention to these survey results.

Besides finding strong support for affirmative action, fair pay for part-time and temporary work, and improved childcare,

the AFL-CIO survey also discovered that many women work long or irregular hours that could intensify stress and make family life more difficult. Two-thirds of working women with children who were surveyed work at least 40 hours a week. Women—especially those who are either young, single, low-paid or have only a high school education—are especially likely to work irregular hours. Women also moonlight on second jobs now nearly as frequently as men do.

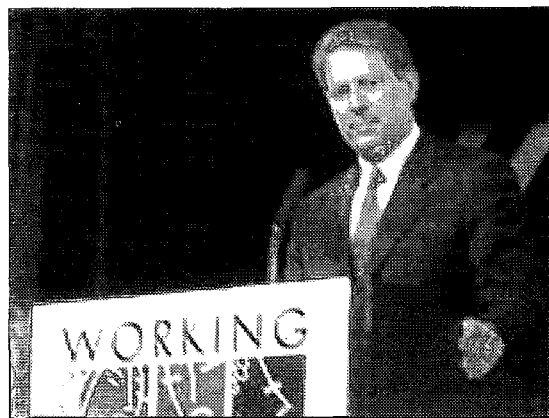
Women are driven to work the hours and schedules they do in large part because many are paid so poorly, argues Karen Nussbaum, director of the Working Women's Department of the AFL-CIO. Although the gap between men's and women's wages has narrowed in recent decades, most of the change has come from declines in men's pay. Women still make 73 cents on average for every dollar that men make, sometimes because of overt discrimination but more often because women are still concentrated in jobs stereotyped as female.

Advocates for working women now seek federal legislation that would extend existing anti-discrimination laws to guarantee equal pay for jobs of comparable worth. "The big overlooked solu-

tion [to the stress in working women's lives] is equal pay," Nussbaum says. "The reason they're working all the extra hours or off hours is because they're not hopeful about getting other solutions."

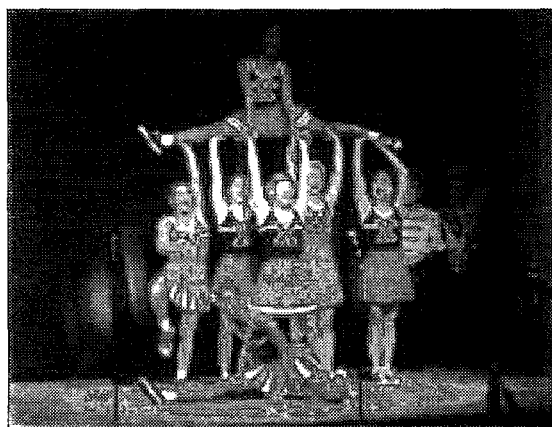
Nussbaum thinks that fewer women (70 percent) set childcare as a top priority compared to equal pay (87 percent) because of a sense of powerlessness. "Childcare is a big solution, but it doesn't come up as much as it could, because many women think, 'If I can't get paid sick leave for myself, what makes you think my boss would pay for child care?'" Nussbaum says. "Women say, 'Pay me more, and I'll find my own solution.'"

One new issue to emerge from the latest survey is paid leave. The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), one of Bill



Al Gore appeared briefly at the AFL-CIO's Working Women's Conference.

Clinton's first legislative successes, has been popular. Overall women took three-fifths of all leaves (6 percent of those leaves are for childbirth). But the biggest single reason people gave for not taking leave from work was that they couldn't afford it—a sentiment of 64 percent of all people who needed a leave. While 22 percent of women with family incomes over \$75,000 took a leave for childbirth, only 13 percent of women with family incomes under \$20,000 did. As a result, there is strong support among both men and women for paid family leave. A February poll reported that 68 percent of women and 56 percent of men were more likely to vote for a candidate who supported expanding the FMLA.



Rooting for equal pay.

Although there are distinct women's dimensions to many of these economic issues, most are also broad class or union issues. Indeed, two out of

three new union members last year were women.

With the exception of affirmative action, men are often nearly as supportive of these "working women's issues" as women are. "Nothing here will drive men away," says Guy Molyneux, vice president of Hart Research, which does much of the AFL-CIO polling. "Even with pay equity, where you might think there could be a downside, men tend to give a pretty strong favorable reaction."

Because of their obvious popularity, Nussbaum doesn't understand why so few candidates stress these issues. "It's a puzzle," she says. "Pay equity has been such a consistent issue. It's not a government program. Why do they not deal with it? If Democrats did, maybe they wouldn't be a minority in the House and Senate."

While Gore has supported better enforcement of laws requiring equal pay for women and men doing the same job, he has not endorsed equal pay for jobs of comparable worth, Nussbaum says. The Clinton-Gore administration has proposed a regulation allowing states to use unemployment insurance funds to pay for family and medical leave.

After trailing George W. Bush significantly last fall, Gore's current position in the polls owes a lot to women's support. A Pew Research Center survey in mid-February showed Bush and Gore in a dead heat, with women favoring Gore by 50 to 43 percent, and men favoring Bush 50 to 40 percent. But Gore did far better with older women than with women under 50, who make up a larger share of working women and prefer Bush 48 to 46 percent.

At the AFL-CIO conference, the energetic crowd enthusiastically cheered Gore, who made a brief appearance. But privately, many expressed lukewarm sentiments, ranging from a wish that his speechwriters would come up with new jokes to puzzlement about why they should actually support a candidate who was so much at odds with them on trade and other global economic issues.

Jane Porter, an Indiana activist with AFSCME, the public employees' union, was dutifully cheering and wearing her "Working Women for Gore" sticker. But when asked if she would be working hard for the vice president this fall, she answered, "I haven't decided at this point."

The decision of women like Porter will make a big difference to Gore's fate. ■

Sunburn

A new banking law is set to silence consumer advocates

By Stanton McManus

Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Texas) is in the middle of a war fighting inequality and the abuse of power. Community investment "as it is now implemented," he says, does not work. Amidst new financial reform, past measures are holding banks prisoner to lecherous, money-grubbing community organizations. "Let me be clear," Gramm said at a banking conference in March. "I intend to fight it every day" and "stand up" to the "abuse" from low- and moderate-income organizations that bankers are now forced to "run up and kiss on the mouth."

Gramm's vitriolic tirade has continued since 1977 when community "extortion" began with the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA). Since then, community groups have used the CRA to bring \$1 trillion in loans and investment to distressed communities, allowing low- and moderate-income borrowers to become 29 percent of all mortgage loan holders. Before the law, financial institutions failed to recycle money back into poor neighborhoods, spending members' deposits elsewhere and essentially blocking community development. The CRA abolished this practice by requiring all federally insured banks to "serve the convenience and needs of all communities in which they are chartered."

However, when the Financial Services Modernization Act passed last November, low- and moderate-income community groups began to fear for the CRA's future. Under the new banking overhaul, trillion-dollar conglomerates will have far less accountability to communities, threatening effective enforcement of non-discriminatory lending. Most of the nation's banks will be immune from CRA examinations for periods of four to five years, and financial holding companies—the banks' den mothers—only need to comply to CRA standards when acquiring a new firm. What's more, the government will not impose any sanc-

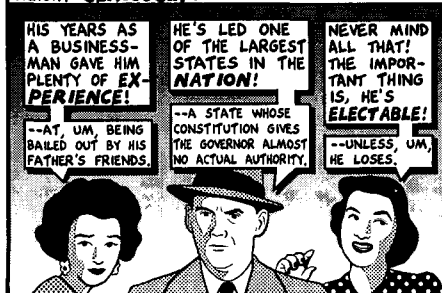
THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

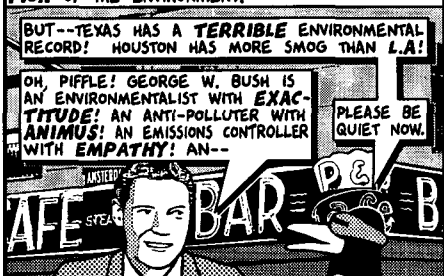
IN THE PECULIAR WEEK BEFORE SUPER TUESDAY, GEORGE BUSH RAN A SERIES OF MISLEADING ADS PAINTING JOHN MCCAIN--WHOSE SISTER IS A BREAST CANCER SURVIVOR--AS AN OPPONENT OF BREAST CANCER RESEARCH.



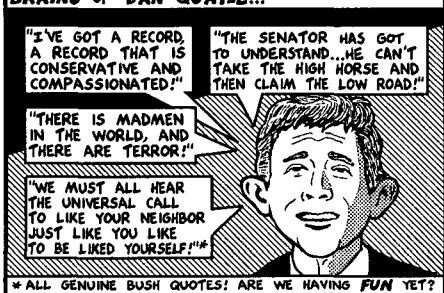
WHICH BRINGS US, IN A ROUNDABOUT WAY, TO THE PERENNIAL QUESTION OF THIS CAMPAIGN SEASON: WHY DO REPUBLICANS TAKE THIS OPPORTUNISTIC LIGHT-WEIGHT SERIOUSLY?



IN ANOTHER COMMERCIAL, FUNDED BY ONE OF BUSH'S WEALTHY SUPPORTERS, VOTERS WERE INFORMED--TO THE SURPRISE OF MANY--THAT UNLIKE THE VERY BAD JOHN MCCAIN, GOV. BUSH IS ACTUALLY A CHAMPION OF THE ENVIRONMENT.



AFTER ALL, EVEN HIS MOST ARDENT SUPPORTERS MUST REALIZE THAT, WHILE HE MAY HAVE HIS FATHER'S LOOKS, HE SEEMS TO HAVE INHERITED THE BRAINS OF DAN QUAYLE...



tions on financial companies, even if they fail to maintain satisfactory ratings under the CRA.

Prior to the banking overhaul, the federal government's monitoring of CRA compliance was already feckless. The real banking watchdogs are community groups like ACORN, who stand up for fair lending and public accountability in poor neighborhoods. To silence these organizations, Gramm inserted a "sunshine provision," which singles out community organizations, intimidating them from testifying, commenting on or filing protests about community lending. The provision also penalizes groups for exercising their First Amendment rights when speaking out against financial mergers, thus silencing protest and quashing petitions of grievance.

In the past, when a bank sought to merge with or acquire another company, community groups would often address concerns about the institutions' CRA records in public hearings. Banks and organizations would then negotiate a CRA agreement if it were shown that a bank had poor lending history. This would usually amount to funds for loan counselors, who would work with members to improve their credit and obtain mortgages. Under the sunshine provision, community groups with CRA agreements—and most importantly, those that have "commented on, testified about or discussed" CRA records with an institution—must produce a "detailed, itemized" report accounting for every cent they spend.

This requirement will effectively cripple the ability of low- and moderate-income community groups to continue closing the homeownership gap. Most will not be able to afford to publicly contest a bank's lending record anymore. The devastating load of



Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Texas) is "a huge fan of the First Amendment."

additional auditing will dry up already scarce funds used for loan counseling. And banks will be reluctant to work with groups whose records are exposed to government scrutiny.

Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) and 16 co-sponsors have introduced legislation to restore the CRA to how it was before (which was not fraught with antagonism—banks always profited from inner-city investments, while groups protested less than 4 percent of all mergers). But the bill will not reach the floor without considerable support. And influential politicians—like President Clinton and Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, who claimed to have "expanded the CRA"—remain silent.

However, the sunshine provision's slippery intent has not been ignored by the four federal banking agencies. During recent meetings to hammer out new banking regulations, many officials have spoken out against the provision. "[The agencies] are concerned about the constitutional questions the sunshine provision raises," says Carolyn Buck, chief counsel for the Office of Thrift Supervision. "We've flagged it as an issue, and [may] take it to the Justice Department."

In drafting the specific guidelines, the agencies could deflect much of the blow by relaxing the provision's hawkish reporting requirements. But as chairman of Senate Banking Committee, Gramm is watching closely and threatening that he is "shooting with real bullets."

The sunshine provision's future will most likely be decided in court. ACORN and other community groups have already begun meeting with attorneys to map out legal strategies. Though some are exploring how to influence the drafting of regulations, many have decided to file lawsuits after the provision silences its first community protest. "The courts will recognize sunshine for what it is," says ACORN President Maude Hurd, "an unconstitutional attempt to restrict groups from speaking out about how banks serve our neighborhoods—and the first step in Gramm's plan to repeal the CRA." ■

With Friends Like These Kissinger does Indonesia

By Terry J. Allen

Asked why he quit writing satirical songs, Tom Lehrer replied that after Henry Kissinger won the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize, there was nothing left to satirize. Lehrer may have underestimated Dr. K's spirited sense of irony.

This February, the former U.S. secretary of state accepted Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid's invitation to become an unpaid adviser to the Indonesian government. Kissinger accepted "out of friendship for the Indonesian people and the importance I attach to the Indonesian nation."

Twenty-five years earlier, on December 6, 1975, Kissinger—along with President Gerald Ford—paid another friendly visit to Jakarta. The next day, as Air Force One cleared Indonesian air space, President Suharto launched some 10,000 troops on a full-scale attack of East Timor. The goal was to conquer and annex the fledgling nation, which had just been granted independence by Portugal. Kissinger now calls the atroci-

ties that accompanied and followed the invasion—200,000 dead—“regrettable.”

To this day, Kissinger maintains that the timing of his 1975 Jakarta visit was a mere coincidence and the United States had no role in the invasion. But a partially declassified State Department document of the December 6 meeting, minutes of a December 18 Washington meeting with his top advisers and other documents have been enough to convince most historians that the United States was complicit in planning, arming and supporting the invasion.

As a recent editorial in the *Asian Times* noted, “Kissinger is an accomplished liar in the service of his nation and his personal image.” Not to mention his bank account. The strength of his fellowship for the Indonesian people is at least rivaled by that of his financial ties to the world’s largest gold mine, located in the remote province of Irian Jaya (now called West Papua). Kissinger sits on the board of New Orleans-based Freeport McMoRan Gold and Copper, the majority shareholder in the massive mining operation, which also happens to be Indonesia’s biggest taxpayer. Friends and family of Suharto, who was ousted in 1998, still hold much of the minority stake in the mine.

In another “coincidence,” Kissinger’s trip to Jakarta came at a time of rising Indonesian dissatisfaction with the mining giant and the terms of its operating contract, which was negotiated during the height of Indonesian cronyism and U.S. dependence. Recently, after several Indonesian legislators visited the company’s 10,000-square-mile mining operation, Jakarta rejected a glowing environmental impact statement prepared by a firm hired by Freeport.

The government indicated it might review Freeport’s contract to operate in Indonesia. But settling into his new role of adviser, Kissinger proffered his first

words of wisdom. Chiding Jakarta for failing to guarantee strict adherence to working contracts signed in the past, he cautioned that “it is in the interests of Indonesia” to honor the contract. “Investors also expect an assurance in law enforcement,” Kissinger reportedly reminded Yasril Ananta Baharuddin, chairman of the House of Representative’s defense commission.

Law enforcement is certainly what Freeport investors got in West Papua in spades ... and clubs. Local and international human rights groups have linked

The mining company also has touted its “exemplary” environmental practices. However, both international and local organizations have accused Freeport of massive pollution. West Papua’s Environmental Impact Management Agency says that the operation has contaminated 514 square miles. Freeport officials insist that the devastated area is only 51 square miles and will soon blossom forth with bananas and pineapples.

While admitting that it dumps 220,000 tons of gravel tailings every day directly into the murky Aghawagon

River, Freeport insists the water is safe and that the local hunter gatherers have failed to provide scientific studies to back up their claims that fish and shellfish—and the people who eat them—are being poisoned by metal from the tailings. Nor have they proven that Freeport’s huge mountains of stored tailings may be leeching into the groundwater.

While all agree that the mining operation has brought with it many of the accoutrements of 20th-century

progress, some of the beneficiaries are less than grateful. They charge that economic change, including patterns of land use and ownership, have undermined indigenous cultures and spawned an epidemic of alcoholism.

All this unrest no doubt makes Kissinger and fellow Freeport board members nervous. In his new role of adviser, the former secretary of state promised to hold regular phone discussions with senior government ministers and to visit Jakarta annually. Accepting his appointment and calling himself “a patriotic American,” Kissinger said “the role of Freeport in Indonesia must be a strictly commercial one and must be to the mutual benefit of Indonesia and Freeport.”

But he promised not to interfere in Indonesian politics (wink, wink). ■



MARK DAVIS/AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING COMPANY/AFP

Free Papua leader Kelly Kwalik

Freeport with persistent human rights violations. The Free Papua Movement, like its counterpart in East Timor, has long sought independence from Jakarta. During Suharto’s 32-year reign, the military, armed with U.S. equipment, burned and strafed villages in an unsuccessful scorched earth campaign to eradicate a tiny band of ill-equipped rebels.

The army reportedly has used Freeport company buses to haul away protesters, and West Papuans have been imprisoned in Freeport chipping containers. Freeport Vice President Paul Murphy vouched for the mine’s innocence: Company equipment, he said, was commandeered by the military. “For years Papuans saw the Indonesian military coming in Freeport helicopters, boats, trucks and Jeeps,” a U.S. missionary told *Time* magazine. “So it’s hard for them to see the difference.”

David vs. Goliath

By Kari Lydersen

Pitting himself against George W. Bush and Al Gore, David McReynolds might as well be fighting Goliath. But such odds have never stopped him before.

McReynolds is the Socialist Party USA's candidate for president, following in the footsteps of Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas. Though he readily admits he has absolutely no chance of winning the election, McReynolds thinks he can stir things up and show that hope for a just, non-capitalist society isn't dead.

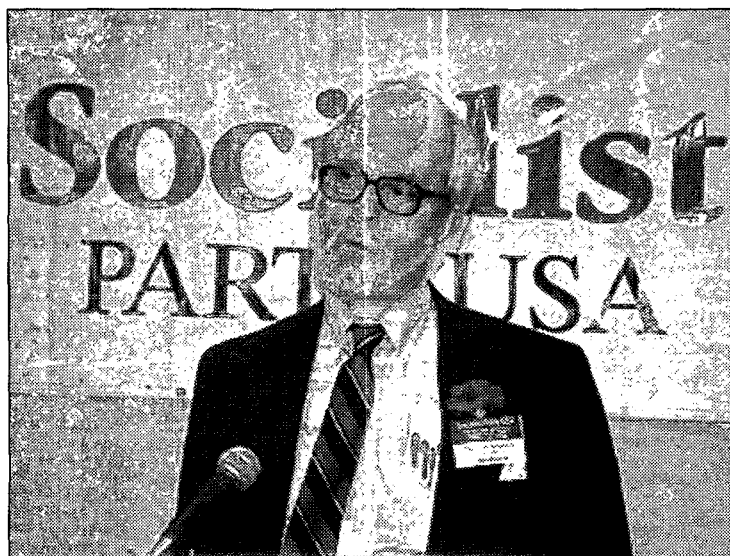
At age 70, McReynolds has been an activist for more than half a century. He was no red-diaper baby, however. Born in Los Angeles a few days before the 1929 stock market crash to religious Republican parents, as a fresh-faced teen-ager, the energy he now devotes to pacifism, socialism and human rights was instead poured into church and the temperance movement. At age 17, he went to Garden City, Kansas to organize for the Prohibition Party.

But as a student at UCLA during the late '40s, McReynolds "fell in with the bohemian socialists," as he tells it, and started to question his beliefs. "During World War II we thought we were fighting for a better world," he says. "So then the Cold War was a terrible shock to us. How do you explain that that was what we were fighting for?"

In 1951 he traveled by ocean liner to a pacifist youth conference in Denmark; he broke with the Protestant Church when he returned and joined the Socialist Party. He left L.A. for New York in 1956 to take a job at *Liberation* magazine, working with A.J. Muste, Bayard Rustin, Dave Dellinger, Sid Lens and Roy Finch, getting what he calls "an education not available at any university."

He ran for Congress in 1958 as a write-in candidate in Lower Manhattan. In 1960, he joined the pacifist War

Resisters League, and worked for the organization until his retirement last year, traveling the world speaking and demonstrating against war and militarization. He was a leading figure in many anti-Vietnam War coalitions, traveling to Vietnam in 1966 and 1971 to meet with dissident groups. He also photographed Pol Pot's death pits in Cambodia and spoke out against U.S. support of the brutal regime.



David McReynolds

He was trapped in Czechoslovakia as Soviet tanks rolled in during Prague Spring of 1968. Later that year, he ran for Congress again on Eldridge Cleaver's Peace and Freedom ticket, managing to get 5 percent of the vote.

He was among the first openly gay political candidates, having come out in *WIN* magazine in 1969, and though he doesn't see himself as a "gay and lesbian candidate," he has continued to work for gay rights.

While so many activists faded away after the '60s and '70s, McReynolds has continued going strong. He ran for president in 1980, calling for the dissolution of NATO. In 1989, he went to Libya to help establish contact with that country, and after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1991, he went to Baghdad to help negotiate the release of several hostages.

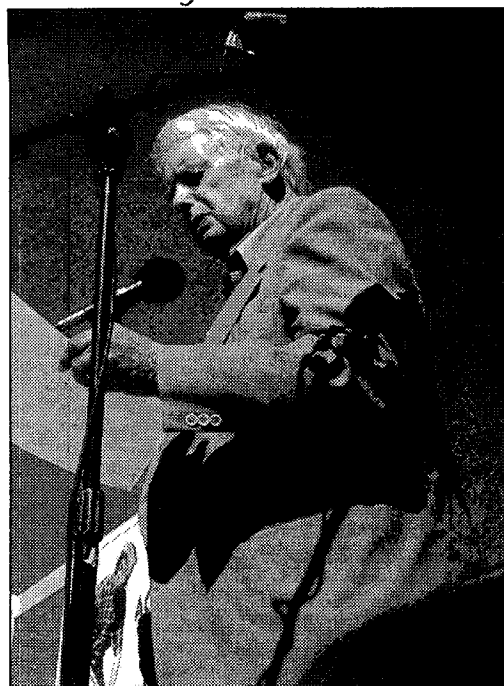
As a presidential candidate again, he hopes to provoke a dialogue among both voters and the mainstream candidates on the issues too often ignored. "There are issues that are never addressed by Gore and Bush that need to be talked about," says McReynolds, who now lives on Manhattan's Lower East Side. "Things like the failure of the drug war, the growth of the prison system, the Iraqi sanctions, the military budget, the fact that we don't have any serious affordable housing. These are not exactly radical issues."

His official platform calls for universal, publicly funded health care, renewable energy, ecologically safe food, equal human rights for all and an immediate 50 percent cut in the U.S. military budget.

While he says there is a limit to how much change can come through electoral politics, McReynolds still thinks it is worth participating. "Having spent a lifetime in the movement, I know electoral politics is a small part of it," he says. "Most civil rights, gay rights, feminist rights were not won through electoral politics but through education and direct action. But the electoral arena is a very legitimate way to raise these issues."

McReynolds isn't worrying about getting on the ballot in every state, but is focusing on key states like Illinois, where demographics and election rules mean he has a better chance to become an official candidate. And while he doesn't particularly care how many votes he gets, he hopes to leave people talking about his ideas for the future.

McReynolds' vision for third party politics is a coalition of labor, gay and lesbian, feminist, socialist, pacifist and other progressive groups. Ultimately, he'd just like to get people to actually consider alternatives to capitalism, instead of just highlighting its faults. "I'm tired of hearing about everything the left is against," he says. "We need to start talking about what we are for." ■



DAVID BROWER'S LAST CH. TAKING OUT GLEN CANYON DAM

By Jeffrey St. Clair

The service station at Dangling Rope, one of the most remote in the United States, sells more gas than any other outlet in Utah. Oddly, the business is more than 50 miles from the nearest road, in one of the least populated landscapes of the lower-48 states. Dangling Rope is a floating gas station, a marina drifting on the eerie, placid waters of Lake Powell. Three hundred feet below are the ruins of Glen Canyon, a natural Atlantis drowned in a man-made flood. The floating gas station, anchored in this surreal spot to refuel the flotillas of houseboats that prowl the reservoir, is a perfect symbol for the grim fate of one of the planet's natural wonders.

The reservoir, the second-largest in the United States, and the downstream remnants of the Colorado River are becoming inexorably toxified. Every four years the pollution discharged into the water from the thousands of motorboats and jet skis that ply the lake's stagnant waters is equal to the amount of crude oil spilled by the Exxon Valdez. To top it off, more untreated human waste is dumped into the reservoir than any other body of water in the United States. Lake Powell is well on its way to becoming a hazardous waste site. It didn't have to be like this.

Perhaps more than any other single issue, Glen Canyon has haunted the conscience of the American environmental movement. At the center of the story is renowned environmentalist David Brower, whose trip down the canyon with Floyd Dominy, then head of the dam-building Bureau of Reclamation, was immortalized in John McPhee's book, *Encounters with the Archdruid*. It was Brower, the most creative and radical green of his generation, who signed off on the building of Glen Canyon dam in 1956, as part of a fateful deal to keep the Bureau of Reclamation from building the Echo Park dam on the Green River inside Dinosaur National Monument in northern Utah. That decision has weighed heavily on him ever since.

Now 87 years old and battling cancer, Brower has returned to the Four Corners region to inaugurate a new campaign aimed at decommissioning the dam, draining Lake Powell and restoring Glen Canyon. Brower's last charge represents a direct confrontation against one of the engines that has driven the development and destruction of canyonland country. He also sees it as a chance for a kind of personal redemption. "It's time to correct one of the most egregious errors of the last century," he says.

The Colorado River has been dubbed the American Nile. Both, of course, are desert rivers, coursing for much of their length through some of the world's most sun-scorched terrain. And each gave rise to great ancient civilizations, the empires of Egypt and the mysterious Anasazi, whose cliff-hugging communal dwellings still embroider the canyonland country. But beyond that it's not a particularly precise metaphor. For one thing, the Nile is three times the size of the Colorado. For another, the Nile is a leisurely river, descending only about 6,000 feet in its 4,200-mile journey to the Mediterranean. The Colorado, born in the alpine snowpack of the Rocky Mountains, freefalls 14,000 feet in a headlong 1,500-mile rush to the Sea of Cortez. It is the compact power of the Colorado that sets it apart—the dramatic way it has slashed through the massive blocks of sandstone on the Colorado plateau, carving out the most bizarre and spectacular landscape on earth. It was a forbidding terrain that intimidated even the conquistadors, who stopped their pillaging forays at the first sight of its vast, seemingly impenetrable chasms.

The first whites to see Glen Canyon were almost certainly in the expedition of Major John Wesley Powell, the crusty one-armed Civil War veteran who floated down the Colorado in wooden dories in 1869. Powell's journal of that trip offers some of the finest nature writing of the 19th century and his detailed description of the canyon and the river remains one of the most precise and compelling. But Powell was no transcendentalist aesthete, no gritty Thoreau of the plateau. His mission wasn't merely to describe this uncharted territory, but to graph it out and discover a way to reclaim the parched land, making it suitable for habitation on a grand scale. The solution, arrived at over the next four decades, was to replumb the entire river system with a network of dams, ditches, canals, diversions, reservoirs and pipelines.

Powell went on to push for the creation of the Bureau of Reclamation in 1902. But the era of dam building had to wait for the competing parties to settle their differences over who would get what from the projects. The Colorado and its tributaries slice their way through seven states, and each one demanded a share of the action. Then there were the Indian tribes, Navajo and Ute, Apache and Havasupai, Hopi and Shoshone, whose rights to the water were undeniable if almost never recognized. The resolution of these claims and counterclaims to the waters of the Colorado resulted in a thick, convoluted and constantly evolving docket of regulations, contracts, court rulings and legislation, known collectively as the "Law of the River." Distilled, the Law of the River comes down to this: first in time, first in right. It's called the doctrine of prior appropriation and was an invitation to a feeding frenzy.

The big issue for the states was how the water would be divvied up. After years of squabbling, they came up with the Colorado River Compact of 1922, which divided the states into two groups, the Upper Basin (Wyoming, Colorado, Utah

and New Mexico) and the Lower Basin (California, Arizona and Nevada). Each basin received rights to half of the Colorado's annual flow. The states in each group were left with the tricky choice of how to divide the water between themselves. By the time they were done, not even a freshet of the river would reach the sea. It has been sucked dry.

The first big dam to go up on the Colorado was Hoover in 1936, designed to funnel water to ever-expanding Los Angeles and the fields and ranches of the Imperial Valley. At the time, Hoover dam was the biggest structure ever built. Behind it, Lake Mead, the world's largest reservoir, held back two year's worth of the Colorado's annual flow. Speaking at the dedication ceremony, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt extolled the project, touting it as the first move toward "altering the geography of the region." FDR's words were prophetic. The raising of that dam sanctified a certain mindset toward the arid lands, what the western historian Donald Worster has called "a world view of permanent subordination." Nature submerged is nature subordinated. Or as Dominy put it: "The Colorado unregulated isn't worth a damn."

The Hoover dam project also inaugurated another grand tradition of Western water schemes: corporate profiting from government pork. The Bureau of Reclamation didn't actually build dams: It planned them, lobbied for them, fudged numbers to make them seem more efficient and fended off attacks against them from Congress and conservationists. Dam building is big business and those billions of dollars were predestined to end up in the coffers of corporations. The lucrative contracts for Hoover dam alone transformed three relatively obscure firms (Kaiser, Bechtel and Morrison-Knudsen) into corporate Goliaths that have stomped around the globe causing ecological mayhem and human misery ever since.

Hoover was California's deal. Then the Upper Basin wanted its shot: Their scheme was grandiose, including dams at Flaming Gorge, Echo Park and Glen Canyon. But then in 1952 along came Brower, the newly hired executive director of the Sierra Club. Brower was outraged by the Bureau of Reclamation's plan to erect a dam at Echo Park inside the

"We need to show other nations that we are serious about cleaning up our own messes. When Glen Canyon comes down, others will fall like dominos."

stunning canyons of Dinosaur National Monument. The proposal brought back bad memories from an earlier era, when John Muir, the Sierra Club's patron saint, fought a futile battle against the flooding of the beautiful Hetch-Hetchy valley in Yosemite National Park in 1913. After that travesty, the Club made a pact: no more dams inside national parks or monuments.

Brower was a master organizer, generating one of the first great national campaigns in the history of the environmental movement. But from the beginning, Brower's focus was riveted on keeping a dam out of Dinosaur National Monument.

GE

At all costs, he feared resetting the precedent of Hetch-Hetchy. So Brower proposed a compromise. In exchange for keeping a dam out of Dinosaur, the Sierra Club wouldn't oppose a dam at Glen Canyon. Indeed, Brower even supported a scheme to raise the height of Glen Canyon dam to accommodate more water storage.

As the dam began to be raised, Brower and photographer Eliot Porter took one last float down the river. They documented their trip in a stunning book, *The Place No One Knew*.

It was a powerful, elegiac testimony to what had been lost, fully capturing the haunted beauty of the canyon. But the book's title was somewhat self-serving and deceptive. It is vital to understand that Glen Canyon was not a wilderness, per se. The Navajo and Ute tribes, and before them the Anasazi, had been living there for centuries. Many others knew and loved Glen Canyon, intimately and passionately, among them folksinger Katie Lee, river guide Ken Sleight, author Edward Abbey, historian Gregory Crampton and the thousands of people who had floated down the Colorado and San Juan rivers.

Another person who knew what would be lost with Glen Canyon dam was the writer Wallace Stegner, a close friend of Brower's who had floated through Glen Canyon twice. Indeed, before the deal was finalized, Stegner told Brower that it was a mistake to trade Glen Canyon for Dinosaur National Monument. "Between us, Dave," Stegner said, "Dinosaur doesn't hold a candle to it."

Brower himself soon came to learn that Stegner was right. Looking back on it, he called the deal his "greatest mistake, greatest sin."

For two years the concrete poured nonstop into the towering pilings of the Glen Canyon dam, and the town of Page sprung up out of nothing nearby. It's now a city of more than 8,000 people. The floodgates on Glen Canyon dam closed on March 23, 1963. From the observation deck outside Page, a quarter-mile downstream from the dam, the 710-foot tall structure appears as a sleek blonde colossus sunk into the blood-red Navajo sandstone.

Admirers of Glen Canyon dam have compared the structure to the pyramids at Giza. It won't last nearly that long. One reason is that the reservoir is fast filling up with silt. The Colorado River deposits 65 million tons of sediment at its base every year. The mud is stacking up at the foot of the dam at the rate of between two and three feet a year. In a little more than 150 years, the silt will have reached the 425-foot level, where it will clog the penstocks that suck water into the power generating turbines.

But the dam may breach well before then, as it almost did in 1983. That year heavy snows and a rapid snowmelt left the Colorado so flush with water that the dam nearly overtopped, becoming a 710-foot waterfall. At the same time, its spillways failed and the dam came close to a catastrophic breach. The flows of the river that year were high, but far from what the Colorado has reached in the past and will reach again sometime in the future.

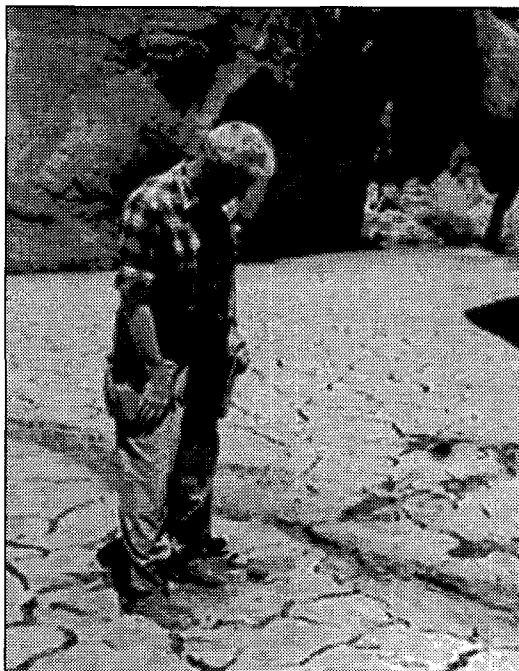
That hasn't been the only problem with the dam. For one thing, it leaks. The Navajo sandstone formation, the soft red rock that gives the canyon its Mars-like hues, is extremely porous; it sucks up water like a sponge. In fact, the entire base of the dam is waterlogged, shedding sheets of saturated sandstone. Internal memos from engineers at the Bureau of Reclamation suspected this would happen, but the reports were buried. At the same time, more than a million-acre feet of Lake Powell's water is lost to evaporation in the searing heat—that's enough water to meet the yearly needs of 34,000 homes.

But water was never the main issue at Glen Canyon. The big money at the dam comes from power generation. The huge turbines in the bowels of the dam generate 1,300 megawatts of power a year, enough power for 350,000 homes (though about 60 percent of it goes on the western power grid to industrial customers). But maddeningly, much of it is used to power engines that pump water from the reservoir on its way to Las Vegas, Phoenix and Flagstaff. In all, it provides less than 3 percent of the electricity for the region.

There was one final insult. Back in 1956, Brower had fought for and won protection for a side canyon harboring Rainbow Bridge, the glorious natural arch that is also one of the most revered sacred sites for the native peoples of the Southwest. But it soon became clear that the Bureau of Reclamation had ignored the deal and that the waters of Lake Powell would creep up to the very base of Rainbow Bridge. An outraged Brower brought a lawsuit in federal court, but lost. The political nightmare unleashed by the Faustian bargain to save Dinosaur National Monument just kept getting worse.

In one way or another, Brower has spent the past 40 years trying to atone. Glen Canyon has become a testament to the perils of political deal-making when it comes to the environment. Brower repeatedly warns young environmentalists: "Never trade a place you know for one you don't."

The closing of the floodgates at Glen Canyon helped spark a new kind of militant environmental movement that rejects political dealing-making and compromises. This new movement had a voice: Edward Abbey. Abbey didn't hold back; he raged against that dam and all it stood for, writing in 1968 that it must come down, one way or another.



Brower has spent the past 40 years trying to atone for Glen Canyon dam.

er. He envisioned the following scenario for the reservoir's dedication in *Desert Solitaire*:

Perhaps some unknown hero with a rucksack full of dynamite strapped to his back will descend into the bowels of the dam. There he will hide his high explosives where they'll do the most good, attach blasting caps to the official dam wiring system in such a way that when the time comes for the grand opening ceremony, when the President and the Secretary of the Interior and the governors of the Four-Corner states are all in full regalia assembled, the button which the President pushes will ignite the loveliest explosion ever seen by man, reducing the great dam to a heap of rubble in the path of the river. The splendid new rapids we will name Floyd E. Dominy Falls, in honor of the chief of the Reclamation Bureau.

In 1981, *Earth First!*, the group inspired by Abbey's musings about monkey-wrenching, marked its arrival on the scene by dropping 300-foot-long plastic strip down the face of the dam, simulating a giant crack.

But Glen Canyon dam doesn't have to end with a boom. It can go out with a whimper and a wild whoosh of water. And that's just what Brower has set his sights on doing. In December 1999, he and a group of some of the finest environmental activists in the country set up shop right in the belly of the beast: in an old ice-cream parlor in Moab, Utah. They call themselves the Glen Canyon Action Network (<http://www.drainit.org>), and their goal is straightforward: build an international movement to force the government to decommission the dam, drain Lake Powell and restore the Colorado River.

The group includes river rafters, small business owners and traditional Navajo. It is headed by Owen Lammers, former chief organizer at the International Rivers Network, where for more than a decade he fought dams around the globe, most notably China's gargantuan Three Gorges project. The developing world is experiencing a spasm of dam-building, which is annihilating rich ecosystems and indigenous cultures. Lammers says that the best way to reverse this ugly trend is to target one of the most famous dams in the world and put it out of business. "That's Glen Canyon, and it's a good thing its located in the United States, because we need to show other nations that we are serious about cleaning up our own messes," he says. "When Glen Canyon comes down, others will fall like dominos."

Is it possible to drain the lake? Yes. Even Dominy, Brower's old nemesis, says so—though, typically, he disagrees on exactly how it could be done. Under most scenarios, the dam itself would remain standing, the Colorado pouring through its floodgates, an absurdist relic of a lamentable era.

"The barriers to a restored Glen Canyon are not so much technical or

economic as political," Lammers says. "It was politics that inundated Glen Canyon. And it will take a peoples' movement to bring about its restoration." The political barriers are familiar ones, though perhaps not as conniving and powerful as the old days. The Western congressional delegation has already reacted with predictable hostility, pushing through a legislative rider that bars the Department of Interior from ever examining the feasibility of decommissioning the dam. At the same time, the federal government is now looking at pulling the plug on four dams on the Lower Snake River along the Idaho-Oregon border to aid dwindling runs of salmon. Those dams provide nearly three times more hydropower than Glen Canyon.

Things change, and even the most craven politician can come to his senses when faced with angry constituents. For others it can be a simple matter of conscience. A few months before he died, Barry Goldwater, the right-wing senator from Arizona, was asked which vote he most regretted in his long career of infamy. "I wish I could take back the vote to put up Glen Canyon dam," Goldwater said. "And let that river run free."

Brower hopes to see that day soon. "The decommissioning of that dam will give the restoration era its big break and bring a lot of joy to the 1,600 miles of Glen Canyon and its side canyons that are magnificent gestures of the earth—to use Ansel Adams' phrase—unmatched on earth or anywhere else," he says. "They are waiting eagerly to be born again. I know, I asked them all." ■



Paper or Plastic? Cloth or Disposable? Mow . . . or Let It Grow?

FREE
TRIAL
ISSUE

It's not easy being green, but help is on the way!

Are you trying to live a more balanced life — one that reflects wise and conscious environmental choices? Struggling with how to eat healthier foods and avoid harmful chemicals? Trying to figure out how your actions and those of others affect the entire ecosystem?

Then look to *E/The Environmental Magazine* — your guide to **informed environmental decisions.**

Every issue of *E* is jam-packed with a wide variety of environmental issues and topics and will provide you with loads of information and ideas for living more in harmony with the Earth.

"Where have I been to miss such an outstanding publication?" — Dean Whitehead, West Hollywood, CA

For informed environmental decisions, send for your **FREE TRIAL ISSUE** today!

SEND FOR A FREE TRIAL ISSUE TODAY!

☒ **YES!** Send me my **FREE** trial issue of *E/The Environmental Magazine*. If I like it, I can subscribe for one year (6 issues) for only \$19.95. If not, I'll just return the subscription invoice marked "cancel" and return it to you. The **FREE** issue is mine to keep with no cost or obligation to me.

NAME _____

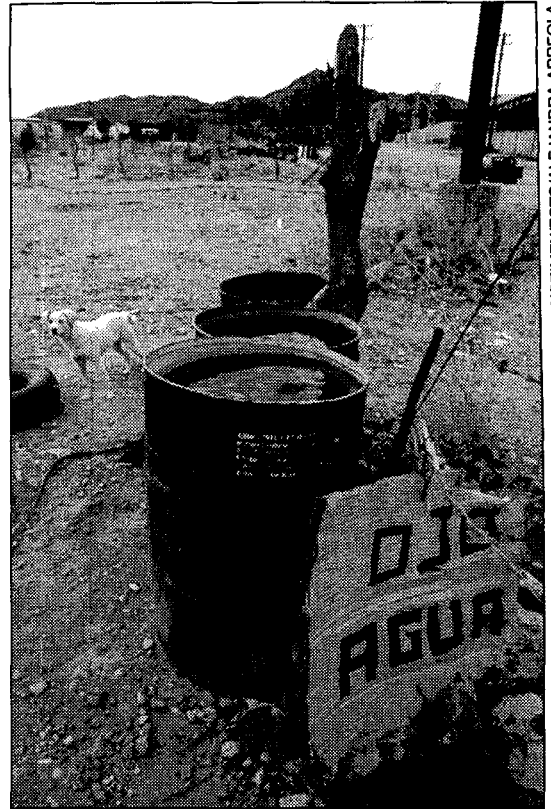
ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

E Magazine, P.O. Box 2047, Marion, OH 43305

For Faster Service Call 1-800-967-6572!





NOTIMEX/FOTO/ALEJANDRA ARREOLA

DOWN THE DRAIN

THE COMING WORLD WATER CRISIS

By Jim Motavalli

A roadside village between New Delhi and Agra, India is obscured by clouds of dust and smoke from passing trucks and scooters. Between an open-air restaurant and a tire-changing shop is a stagnant pond, its banks bare of vegetation. Bright green algae the color of artificial turf floats on the surface, which is periodically disturbed by splashing children and thirsty cows.

There's nothing unique about this contaminated water supply; the scene is repeated hundreds of thousands of times throughout the world. Our beleaguered planet is in the midst of an acute fresh water crisis that is likely to intensify in the coming years, exacerbated by global warming, industrial pollution, high-tech agriculture, misplaced development priorities and the steady pressure of exploding populations.

Fresh water is the most finite of finite resources, constituting just 2.5 percent of the planet's total moisture (with two-thirds of that supply entombed in glaciers). A mere 0.008 percent of the earth's water is part of the

hydrologic cycle, meaning it falls as precipitation. Of that tiny percentage, two thirds evaporates or is used by plants. The rest, so-called runoff, is what's left to fill our rivers, streams and aquifers.

In water-scarce California, more than 80 percent of that limited resource goes to agriculture, energy production, recreation and the need to ensure adequate water flow. Cities get less than 10 percent of the total. As California goes, so goes the rest of the world. Agriculture consumes 65 percent of all the water that people take out of rivers and streams or pump from underground, according to a 1996 article in *Science* magazine. Twenty-two percent goes to industry. A mere 7 percent is left over for towns and cities.

It takes 291,000 gallons of water to supply a single person with a modest, low-meat diet for a year. To grow just one ton of grain, farmers need to use 1,000 tons of water. In her book, *Last Oasis: Facing Water Scarcity*, Sandra Postel, director of the Global Water Policy Project, predicts that providing drinking water for the

2.4 billion people expected to be added to the world's population in the next 30 years would take resources equivalent to 20 Nile or 97 Colorado rivers. "It is not at all clear where that water could come from on a sustainable basis," she says.

Because of our chronic misuse of water, shortages loom around the world. Based on a subsistence level of 1,700 cubic meters of water per person per year, the World Bank estimates that 31 countries have scarce water resources, mostly in Africa and the Middle East. The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization predicts "a worsening in food security" in Sub-Saharan Africa, because irrigated farmland is disappearing and grain imports are growing. By 2025, Postel estimates, 1.1 billion Africans, or three-quarters of the continent's population, will be living in water-stressed countries.

Unsanitary water is responsible for as much as 80 percent of all disease in the developing world and around 10 million deaths a year, according to Alan Dupont of Australia's Strategic Defense Studies Center. Writing in a recent issue of the *Straits Times*, a Singapore newspaper, he asks, "Will future wars be fought over increasingly scarce fresh water resources?" It's becoming a common question. Former U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has predicted that the next war in the Middle East will be "over the waters of the Nile, not politics."

The world's cities are projected to gain more than 2 billion people (the population of India and China combined) by 2025, and it's unknown whether the water resources exist to serve them. "We can see examples of cities collapsing in the developing countries because the water is no longer useable," says Malin Falkenmark, a professor at the Swedish Natural Science Research Council and co-winner of the 1998 Volvo Environmental Prize with Canadian scientist David Schindler.

Speaking with Falkenmark at a press conference in Belgium, Schindler said that the acceleration of global warming is worsening the water crisis by, among other things, melting glaciers and releasing pollutants that were stored in the ice during the '60s and '70s. The two scientists warn that unless food exports to dry developing countries increase six-fold, industrial and agricultural water pollution is cut to a minimum, and conflicts between upstream and downstream water users can be resolved (as in the case of people living on the lower Yellow River in China, who are deprived of water 200 days a year because of intense upstream industrial use), the world will face a series of increasingly bloody confrontations over water.

It won't simply be water rights they're fighting over. Rivers, lakes and ponds are important ecosystems, which are losing biological diversity because of relentless human intervention. Today, our rivers are becoming biological deserts, thanks to overfishing, direct and runoff pollution, and an ongoing policy of "taming" our wild waterways with endless dams. Dams, especially the giant, pharaonic projects that are proliferating in the developing world, have come under intense scrutiny, but that hasn't kept them from being built. China today has more than 20,000 large dams, half of the world's count, and is building the stupefying Three Gorges Dam, which will displace 1.5 million people and create a 372-mile reservoir.

In the United States, eight major dams on the Columbia

and Snake Rivers as they flow through Washington and Oregon have nearly wiped out wild salmon, which once sustained whole communities. The commercial catch of salmon in the Columbia River alone totaled 50 million pounds in 1920; today, it is virtually zero. In 1992, only one sockeye salmon, nicknamed "Lonesome Larry," made it through a formidable gauntlet of dams and industrially polluted water to reach his spawning grounds in Idaho's Redfish Lake.

In a 1996 Worldwatch report entitled "Imperiled Waters, Impoverished Future," Janet Abramovitz notes that the Great Lakes once supported a commercial fish harvest of 3 million pounds annually. Of the 11 species taken, four are now extinct and the remaining seven are "at risk." Commercial fishing in the Mississippi River basin declined 83 percent in the past 50 years. Similarly, the Rhine River supported a catch of 150,000 salmon at the turn of the 20th century. The fish were completely gone by 1958. The 15 individual salmon seen in the river five years ago were believed to have been escapees from a Norwegian fish hatchery.

There are examples like this all over the world. Diverted water and sediment buildup in the Nile River have destroyed the economic viability of 30 of 47 commercial fish species. Africa's Lake Chad has shrunk 90 percent in the past 30 years, partly because of agricultural diversion. The Caspian Sea has become an oil-saturated stinkhole, threatening the last caviar-producing sturgeon, and projections are that the pollution will get worse as a huge new international pipeline is built. Such tragedies as January's Romanian cyanide spill have destroyed entire river-based ecosystems. According to a Hungarian environmental group, the Szamos and Tisza Rivers "are so highly polluted that practically the total flora and fauna have disappeared."

Are there any hopeful signs? Most American rivers and streams are cleaner than they were 30 years ago (though the reverse is true in many developing countries). Massachusetts' sewage-ridden Nashua River, for instance, ran red with paper mill dye in the '60s; the highest form of life it supported was sludge worms. But through the work of groups like Adopt-A-Stream and Save Our Streams, rivers like the Nashua have been cleaned up. Other rivers, like Colorado's San Juan and Florida's Kissimmee, now teem with life because their natural flow has been restored, saving them from near-death at the hands of the Army Corps of Engineers.

Internationally, some countries have agreed to work

Former U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has predicted that the next war in the Middle East will be "over the waters of the Nile, not politics."

together to better share their water resources. The U.N. General Assembly started observing a World Water Day (March 22) in 1993, and one of its objectives is building an international movement for universal clean water. As *In These Times* went to press, the second World Water Forum was beginning in The Hague. While it may be long on rhetoric and short on action, some practical progress toward

resolving international water disputes may come out of it.

There's a lot that can be done at the grassroots level. For instance, Postel says investing farmers with water rights could produce dramatic results. She notes that when farmers can make more money selling water to the city than spreading it on crops, then they have an incentive to irrigate more efficiently, and there's less pressure to build municipal dams. "The cities benefit, and the farmers do, too, because they're getting extra income from the sale of the water," she says.

Ultimately, the world will have to learn to live within its natural limits. Just as we will have to cope with a declining supply of oil in the face of increasing world demand, so too will we have to learn how to cope with this vastly more precious and equally finite resource. ■

Jim Motavalli is editor of *E: The Environmental Magazine* and author of *Forward Drive: The Race to Build "Clean" Cars for the Future* (Sierra Club Books/Random House).

WATER WAR ZONE

Bolivians take to the streets over the price of water

By Jim Shultz

COCHABAMBA, BOLIVIA

A grassroots rebellion over the rules of economic globalization erupted in January in this city of half a million high in the Andes. This time the battle was over something very simple, the price of water.

Last year, under direct pressure from the World Bank, the Bolivian government sold off Cochabamba's public water system to a consortium of British-led investors. In January, the new owners, Aguas Del Tunari, handed local water users their monthly bills, emblazoned with a spanking new corporate logo and hikes in water rates that were more than double for many families. In a country where the minimum wage is less than \$100 per month, many users were hit with water bills of \$20 and higher.

In mid-January, Cochabamba residents shut down their city for four straight days with a general strike led by a new alliance of labor, human rights and community leaders. All transportation came to a halt, roads were blockaded, no buses were allowed in or out of town, and the government was forced to the negotiating table, agreeing to a price rollback and a two-week deadline to work out the details.

However, it soon became clear that the government's promises were vanishing into thin air. Movement leaders announced plans for a massive but peaceful march to the city's Central Plaza on February 4. Bolivian President Hugo Banzer, who ruled the country as a dictator from 1971 to 1978, responded by bringing in more than 1,000 police and soldiers from outside the city and imposing a military takeover of Cochabamba's center. For two days, while popular leaders and government officials held tense negotiations, police showered tear gas and rubber bullets on rock-wielding protesters, men and women, young and old, poor and middle-class. More than 35 protesters were injured and one youth was blinded. (U.S. Embassy officials acknowledge that the United States has given gas to the Bolivian government before. Embassy officials responded that "to the best of our knowledge" no U.S.-donated gas was used against the water protesters.)

The privatization of water is just the latest in a decade-long series of sales of Bolivian public enterprises to international private investors—including the national airline, train system and electric utility—as government officials carefully toe the neoliberal

line that "private is better." While the promises have been about an infusion of new investment, the more obvious results have been weakened labor standards, price increases and reductions in services (train service is gone altogether).

Privatizing Cochabamba's water was a major item in the World Bank's June 1999 report on Bolivia, which specifically called for "no public subsidies" to hold down water price hikes. Poor countries like Bolivia reject World Bank advice at the peril of being cutoff from international assistance. In a process with just one bidder, local press reports calculated that investors put up less than \$20,000 of up-front capital for a water system worth millions.

It is worth noting that well-paid World Bank economists in Washington will now pay less for water per month than Tanya Paredes, a mother of five who supports her family as a clothes knitter. Her water bill went up in January from \$5 per month to nearly \$20, an increase equal to what it costs her to feed her family for a week and a half. "What we pay for water comes out of what we have to pay for food, clothes and the other things we need to buy for our children," she explains.

Price hikes like these led to widespread support for the protests. "Everyone took a role," says Oscar Olivera, the Cochabamba labor leader who has become the protests' most visible spokesman. "Youth were on the front lines, the elderly made roadblocks." When protest leaders called on the radio for a citywide transportation stoppage in response to the police crackdown, little old women with bent spines were out in the streets within minutes, building blockades with branches and rocks.

The February uprisings forced government officials to promise a rollback of the rate hike and a review of the water company contract, a pact that movement leaders want annulled entirely. "We're questioning that others, the World Bank, international business, should be deciding these basic issues for us," Olivera says. "For us, that is democracy." ■

Jim Shultz, executive director of *The Democracy Center* (www.democracyctr.org), lives in Cochabamba.



RIVERS OF CYANIDE

MINING DISASTERS THE MEDIA MISS

By Jason Vest

A recent modern media lesson: If millions of Internet users are temporarily inconvenienced by Web site service disruptions while, at the same time, millions of inhabitants of an entire ecosystem are threatened with death and economic ruin courtesy of 100 tons of river-borne cyanide, pull out the stops and expend reams of hand-wringing copy over cybervandalism and its implications. Ignore the actual sentient beings a continent away.

As reported in the previous issue of *In These Times*, on January 30 the Baia Mare gold mine in Romania—partly owned and operated by Esmerelda, an Australian mining corporation—accidentally loosed a waterborne plume of cyanide from a tailings (mining-speak for waste) dam into the Tisza River, a major waterway that spans Romania, Hungary and the former Yugoslavia, eventually emptying into the Danube. To date, approximately 1,000 tons of dead fish have been pulled from the river; according to the *Boston Globe's* Theresa Agovino—one of only three American correspondents rapidly dispatched to cover what European officials are calling “the greatest environmental disaster since Chernobyl”—the 1.6 million Hungarians who depend on the Tisza’s fishing and tourist operations for their livelihood are looking at hard times, if not devastation.

Comparable numbers of Romanians and Yugoslavs have been similarly affected; millions were left without drinking water. While there was one spot of cold comfort—cyanide disperses quickly in water—the

river’s semi-frozen state has delayed the chemical’s breakdown. There’s another problem: Tests indicate the cyanide was accompanied by a similar quantity of toxic heavy metal waste, which will likely settle into the riverbeds and continuously contaminate the rivers and their adjacent water tables. In effect, the river and everything in it was put into a toxic environmental coma.

Yet as this appalling event unfolded, the U.S. media took practically no notice. There were some exceptions: The *Los Angeles Times* dispatched the inimitable Paul Watson to the scene, *Time* gave the story 800 words, and the *Christian Science Monitor* weighed in with a nuanced article. Yet the *New York Times* relegated to story to the briefs page, while the *Washington Post* ran a story penned in its 15th and L Street headquarters days after the news broke. And as most foreign dispatches are these days, news on the spill that appeared in the rest of the U.S. press was mostly in “world briefs” form.

Failure to properly cover this story and its myriad angles contributes to a dangerously myopic sense of American cultural isolationism at a time when America should be thinking of itself in less provincial terms. Mark Jaffe of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* grasped this, and wrote an informative piece on the troubling transnational nuances of using cyanide in mining. Rob Zaleski of Madison, Wisconsin’s *Capital Times* found a local angle—a proposed cyanide leaching operation in nearby Crandon.

Despite mining industry claims about the safety of using cyanide to dissolve tons of rock in search of a little gold, says Stephen D'Esposito of the Mineral Policy Center in Washington, it's a given that about once a year a tailing pond will overflow. The Baia Mare spill is the 26th such major incident since 1971; six have occurred in the last five years, in places as diverse as China, Spain, the Philippines, Guyana and South Africa. Others have happened in Italy and Japan.

In 1998, two people died and scores of fish were killed when a truck en route to the Canadian-owned Kumtor Mine in Kyrgyzstan accidentally dumped two tons of cyanide into the Barskaun River. In that particular case, while Kyrgyzstan might have been far away, your money wasn't; the U.S.-run Overseas Private Investment Corporation provided political risk insurance for the project, and the U.S.-subsidized World Bank provided \$85 million in loans and insurance. (Reassuringly, just last month, another truck wrecked and spilled a large quantity of ammonium nitrate.)

In the 1995 spill in Guyana at the Omai Gold Mine—jointly owned by Canada's Cambior and Golden Star, a subsidiary of Denver-based Invesco—825 million gallons of cyanide gushed through a breach for five days, contaminating 50 miles of the Essequibo River. Despite environmental records at both companies that include previous cyanide spills, the World Bank reinsured the mine in 1992 to the tune of \$49.8 million.

But when it comes to cyanide coursing through waterways—and citizens footing the bill to clean it up—not all these disasters happen overseas. After 51 spills and dam breaches over a decade, citizens in Montana organized a grassroots effort to put a “ban cyanide mining” initiative on the state ballot in 1998—and won. But elsewhere, the legacy of poison overwhelms any sense of optimism. Residents around Stanley, Idaho, had hoped that they'd heard the last of cyanide spills from the Grouse Creek Mine in 1995. But late last year, the U.S. Forest Service was forced to take emergency measures after it discovered toxic discharge from the now-abandoned mine. Meanwhile in Colorado, the EPA recently marked its eighth year and 170 millionth Superfund dollar spent in its ongoing effort to clean up the aftermath of the Summitville Mine cyanide leaks, a series of spills between 1986 and 1992 that damaged the Alamosa River.

Danny Kennedy, director of the Berkeley, California-based mining watchdog Project Underground, says he's afraid in more ways than one that Baia Mare will be a repeat of Summitville. He predicts that Esmerelda will eventually declare bankruptcy, leaving no one to hold accountable.

In the Summitville case, Robert Friedland, whose Canadian-based Galactic Resources Limited ran the mine, simply declared Galactic insolvent, a maneuver that infuriated U.S. authorities so much that they're still embroiled in complex international litigation, trying to get Friedland to pay his fair share of clean-up costs. (It was another Friedland company, Golden Star, that soiled the Essequibo River in Guyana.) “The example of Mr. Friedland, and now Esmerelda, is that we need to ensure proper bonding procedures for reclamation and we need to pursue violators as a basic matter of course across borders,” Kennedy says.

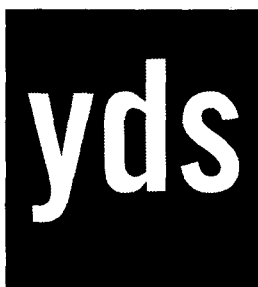
Indeed, it's hard not to see these as financial crimes as well, says Kennedy, an Australian national who, while on holiday last month down under, helped break the Baia Mare story. “I sent the tip to the Mineral Policy Institute

in Sydney, and the person who answered the phone was a junior staffer who was basically wanting to get it out, because they'd been sitting on it for over a week,” he says. “I think [Esmerelda] should be sued by the stock exchange in Australia for failing to inform their investors in a timely fashion. They were staving off the story for eight days while people were pouring more money into them.”

On the bright side, D'Esposito says the international community's reaction to the spill has been better than average. “Reaction should have been quicker,” he notes. “But it seems to me that this is different than in other situations, in that the international community and European Union in particular have mobilized, and they seem to be taking this seriously.”

For its part, the State Department gave EPA personnel working on the Summitville clean-up in Colorado a green light to assist their Romanian counterparts. “They'll have a lot to offer there,” D'Esposito says. “Clean-ups like this struggle through complexities and uncertainties, and having people on the ground who've faced those problems should help a lot.”

The EPA may also be asked to apply its expertise to another potentially devastating situation in Romania, which is fast becoming the poster-child for lax mining-safety enforcement. On March 10, 20,000 tons of lead- and zinc-laced water burst through a dam at the state-owned mine in Baia Borsa, spilling in the Vaser and Tisza rivers. “Communities around the world have been calling attention to the danger these kinds of mines pose for a long time,” says Shanna Langdon, mining campaign coordinator for Project Underground. “Hopefully these two disasters will wake up the world to the fact that we need more stringent international standards to govern mining operations.” ■



FEMINISM DEMOCRACY SOCIALISM

**Speak truth to
Power**

**Join the country's largest group of kids
with the guts to call themselves socialists**

young democratic socialists
(212) 727-8610 www.dsusa.org/youth
180 Varick Street, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10014



SPLICED AND DICED

AMERICA PUSHES FRANKENFOODS

By Karen Charman

Despite years of effort by the United States to scuttle a global agreement establishing rules for international trade in genetically modified organisms (GMOs), one was agreed to by more than 130 countries in Montreal at the end of January. Media reports immediately hailed the agreement, officially known as the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, as a victory for all sides. But the protocol falls short of its intended purpose of giving countries the tools they need to protect their natural environments from genetic contamination if unwanted traits from genetically modified crops escape into the wild.

Poverty-stricken developing countries, most of which lie in warm tropical or semi-tropical areas that contain the vast majority of the world's biological wealth, are particularly concerned about the unintended impacts GMOs might have on their environments. Beth Burrows of the Edmonds Institute, a nonprofit organization working to preserve biodiversity, says that without adequate scientific capabilities or regulatory frameworks, developing countries are particularly ill-equipped to handle any problems that GMOs might cause.

Genetically modified food crops have been commercially grown and exported since 1996 without a set of international rules specifically devoted to them. The United States, the main producer of these products, has claimed from the beginning that gene-spliced varieties are no different than other agricultural crops. Therefore, U.S. biotech promoters argue, special rules simply aren't necessary.

But others, including prominent geneticists, molecular

biologists and ecologists, don't agree that GMO environmental impacts are a non-issue. They point out that because GMOs are live organisms that grow, reproduce, mutate and migrate, their presence in the environment is a lot more complex than the U.S. biotech industry and its supporters acknowledge. Even staunch defenders of biotechnology like Sir Robert May, the British government's chief scientific adviser, have expressed specific worries about the long-term impacts of transgenic agriculture on biodiversity. Harvard geneticist Richard Lewontin told *The New York Times Magazine* in an October 1998 article: "We have such a miserable understanding of how the organism develops from its DNA that I would be surprised if we don't get one rude shock after another."

At the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, 175 countries signed a U.N. convention on biological diversity, which committed signatories to develop a protocol of international legal rules governing the movement, handling and use of GMOs. At the heart of the protocol lie two basic rights: a country's right to know what it is importing, and a government's right to refuse an import it believes endangers its population.

The process of developing the protocol has been mired in contentious politics. The United States has embraced biotechnology as one of the pillars of economic growth, and it has tried to prevent anything that might hinder its acceptance. The United States teamed up with five other grain-exporting countries—Canada, Australia, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, collectively known as the Miami Group—to push for the weakest possible pro-

tol. On the other side, the Like-Minded Group, which is made up of more than 100 developing countries and China, wants strict regulation of GMOs. The European Group and the smaller Compromise Group (Norway, Switzerland, Japan, Mexico and South Korea) are in the middle, recognizing a need for safety, but also wanting to encourage GMO trade.

Consistent with its position that GMOs are no different than other products, the U.S. biotech industry has fought demands (both here at home and by other countries) to identify its genetically modified products with labels. The Miami Group did agree to rules requiring labels, risk assessments and consent for shipments of GMOs that are intended to be released into the environment, such as seeds and live fish. However, it would not agree to specifically label bulk commodity shipments, such as grain, because it claimed such a requirement could obstruct the free movement of transgenic commodities, which make up the bulk of genetically modified trade.

But Ethiopian environment minister Tewolde Egziabher insists clear and full labeling of genetically modified commodity grain imports is particularly important to developing countries. Egziabher, the lead negotiator for the Like-Minded Group, says that's because Third World farmers often plant commodity grain in their fields as seed. The grain is also typically cleaned and processed in people's homes or small village mills, so there are plenty of opportunities for it to spill and take hold in the wild.

The final compromise requires transgenic commodity exporters to provide shipping documents stating the shipment "may contain" living modified organisms. The protocol makes provisions for further negotiations to strengthen the labeling requirements two years after the protocol takes effect. But the protocol won't be enforced until 50 countries ratify it, a process most expect to take two or three years.

Environmentalists argue that authorities should have the right to say no to imports even if their potential harm is not fully known. This concept, known as the precautionary principle, is clearly stated in the biosafety protocol. While the inclusion of the precautionary principle is positive, other language in the treaty may dampen its effect. One of the most contentious issues throughout the negotiations was how the biosafety protocol would relate to other international agreements, namely trade agreements under the World Trade Organization.

The Miami Group wanted WTO agreements to override the protocol, because the WTO would likely dismiss concerns about GMOs in the biosafety protocol as barriers to free trade and rule them invalid. They failed to get that, but the protocol does say it "shall not be interpreted as implying a change in the rights and obligations ... under any existing international agreements." So a country invoking the precautionary principle to keep GMOs out still might find itself defending its action before the WTO.

The protocol also leaves open the question of liability—who is responsible if a GMO does wreak ecological havoc. To Burrows, that is the issue that will ultimately determine whether the protocol ends up being of any use to countries in protecting their biological resources. "It's necessary to define the ramifications and responsibilities of actions up front, otherwise there is no incentive to prevent harm," she explains. "Liability plays that role in our society, but the biosafety protocol does not adequately address it. Without liability, there is no protocol."

Because of the protocol's weak language, Val Giddings of the Biotechnology Industry Organization, the industry's trade association, doesn't expect the biosafety protocol to have

much impact at all. "It won't disrupt trade because it doesn't apply to products that are moving through commerce today, with the exception of certain research materials and possibly seeds," he says. "The language of the protocol is permissive, not compulsory. It doesn't compel anybody to do anything."

While the biosafety protocol as it stands now may be too weak to enable sovereign nations to stop or slow the flow of genetically modified products, public opposition may influence future negotiations. Dawkins notes that a year ago the United States was able to quash the protocol at the special meeting in Cartagena, Colombia that was set up to finalize it. However, since then consumer outrage has erupted in Europe, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere, dramatically altering the political landscape. "The United States has been losing ground on this year after year because of global political trends," Dawkins says. "These trends will continue, so the protocol becomes a vehicle for continually upgrading regulations, despite the loopholes."

In Europe, which has experienced unprecedented consumer revolts over GMOs in the past few years, the protocol is being interpreted differently. One European official, who requested anonymity, says the fact that the protocol clearly defines genetically engineered products as something separate from conventionally bred crops gives the European Union the ammunition it needs to reject biotech imports. The United States and Europe are already embroiled in a trade war over Europe's refusal to allow imports of American hormone-treated meat, and, the official adds, the European Union is prepared to fight at the WTO to keep bioengineered foods out.

Even with the protocol, Burrows notes, refusing genetically modified imports will be significantly more difficult for developing countries, who have much more to lose in financial aid and other arrangements that keep them tied to the United States. Nor would developing countries likely do very well in WTO proceedings because it is much harder for them to prepare the scientific assessments the WTO would require.

Though public opposition has put the biotech industry on

"The language of the protocol is permissive. ... It doesn't compel anybody to do anything."

the defensive for the moment, the possibility of hundreds of billions of dollars of patent revenue attached to virtually everything almost everyone on the planet eats may just be too much for the biotech industry to walk away from. In an attempt to discredit anyone raising environmental or safety concerns about the technology, the industry is now in full public relations combat mode.

The next formal meeting on the biosafety protocol takes place in May in Nairobi, where countries that have ratified the protocol will sign on. Before the end of the year, there will be a meeting in France to gauge how the protocol is faring among the 130 countries that negotiated it and to discuss some of the protocol's unfinished business.

How the protocol develops will depend very much on whose voices ultimately prevail—those of citizens around the world or those of U.S.-dominated corporate agribusiness. ■

How To Deal with Gore

Dump him—just look at his record

By Jeffrey St. Clair

So, Al Gore's the man. This is hardly breaking news. The competition from Bill Bradley, who ran the most somnambulant campaign since John Glenn's sleepwalk in 1988, wasn't exactly bracing. Even so, Gore didn't escape unscathed. The plodding Bradley drew blood from an unexpected flank: Gore's reputation as an honest broker. Bradley exposed Gore as a political transvestite, a lifelong conservative Democrat who only adopts the mantle of liberalism when it's convenient (such as in Democratic primaries). He reeled off a litany of Gore flip-flops on abortion, gun control, tobacco, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, affirmative action, welfare reform and civil rights. This was, Bradley tried to remind people, the man who in his sleazy 1988 campaign race-baited Jesse Jackson and first raised the specter of Willie Horton against Michael Dukakis.

Many observers were caught off-guard when Bradley also ridiculed Gore's reputation as an environmentalist. The corporate press, lethargic as ever, snickered. "Attacking Gore on the environment is like questioning Mother Teresa's faith," said Jonathan Alter, *Newsweek's* chief talking head. But just as Christopher Hitchens showed that the Virgin of Calcutta was no saint, so too did Bradley have the goods on Gore—if any one would have bothered to look.

In the 1992 campaign, Gore used the environment as a sledgehammer against Bush and Quayle. One issue raised over and over was a hazardous waste incinerator slated for East Liverpool, Ohio, which Gore vowed to block. But within months of taking office, the EPA, run by former Gore staffer Carol Browner, reversed course and issued a permit for the deadly plant. This stunning betrayal was a sign of things to come. It was swiftly followed by capitulations on the Everglades, ancient forests, fuel efficiency standards, pesticides in foods, wetland protection, oil development in Alaska and the Gulf of Mexico, subsidies for nuclear power, organic food standards and ozone-depleting chemicals. And on and on.

Connoisseurs of Gore's career aren't shocked by any of this. His voting record on environmental matters during his tenure in the House and Senate was mediocre by any standard and

downright miserly when compared to his fellow Democrats. Gore, ever ready with an excuse, puts the blame on his home state of Tennessee, which he suggests was somewhat backward in environmental matters. But the people who know Gore best say he was rarely if ever there for them on pressing matters on the homefront, ranging from strip-mining to radioactive contamination at Oak Ridge to the pollution of the Pigeon River by Champion International. "More often than not, Al Gore sided with the polluters against the people," says Maddy Cochrane, a longtime environmental organizer in Chattanooga. "Gore follows the money."

When confronted with the zigzagging pattern of his positions on these matters, Gore becomes petulant, putting on a wounded expression. Moments after he learned that Friends of the Earth had endorsed Bradley, Gore was on the phone to the CEOs of the other big green groups, claiming that he had been personally hurt by the decision. The ploy worked. Within days, executives from the Sierra Club and Natural Resources Defense Council issued statements vouching for Gore's green bona fides and chiding Friends of the Earth for its political heterodoxy.

The move by the big groups to provide cover for Gore dismays America's premier green, David Brower. "Environmentalists and progressives cannot endorse rhetoric and that's the greenest thing we have seen from the vice president," says Brower, chairman of Earth Island Institute.

Gore hopes to pin the responsibility for the lame record of the last eight years on Clinton. But it won't sell. Clinton was indifferent to environmental issues and gave Gore free rein on green matters. The Gore team ran the show from the beginning.

Aside from Browner, Katie McGinty, another Gore Senate aide, headed the powerful Council on Environmental Quality until last year. Former Gore staffers were also at the Department of Energy, the Commerce Department and the Office of Management and Budget. Gore intimate Tim Wirth, the former senator from Colorado, served as assistant secretary of state for the environment, where he spearheaded the outrageous move to loosen protections for dolphins from industrial tuna-fishing fleets. Then there's George Frampton, who became assistant secretary of interior, resigned in 1997, served for a year as Gore's lawyer during the campaign finance scandal, then went back to work in the administration in McGinty's old position at the CEQ.

The vice president himself has been caught red-handed on several occasions going to bat for corporations against the interests of environmentalists. A little-reported example is Gore's fervent efforts on behalf of Monsanto, the St. Louis-based

Environmentalists could throw a monkey-wrench in Gore's plans by massing their support behind Ralph Nader's run on the Green Party ticket.

chemical giant. The vice president made a series of forceful calls to heads of state, including the leaders of Ireland and France, stressing his opposition to move by the European Union to ban import of genetically engineered seeds and food products.

The lesson of Al Gore's political career is that he is a craven opportunist, not an ideologue. He gravitates toward the side that offers him the greatest advantage. Now that Bradley has been vanquished and the key progressive constituencies already sewn up, watch Gore start his natural migration back to the right, stiff-arming blacks, working people and greens all the way. By the time he gets to Los Angeles in August, he'll be reading from the DLC pro-business play-book once again.

The environmentalists could throw a monkey-wrench in Gore's plans by massing their support behind Ralph Nader's run on the Green Party ticket, making it clear that they did so mainly because Gore was AWOL on the environment when it counted most. Nader won't win, but he could garner just enough votes to make Gore lose key states such as California, New York and Washington. Inflicting this kind of political pain is the only sure way to get Gore's attention.

As Brower says: "It's time to start standing up for what we stand on." ■

We Can Make Him Go Green

By Lois Marie Gibbs

The answer to Gore's broken promises and dismal voting record is not to say, "let's vote for Ralph Nader who won't win anyhow." That's a cop-out. What can we possibly gain from this thinking? Our options are not limited to voting for a candidate who has let us down, or to disengage from the process and only participate by casting a "protest" vote. We have a third choice: Approach the elections with a focused, hard-hitting strategy to push the issues we care about.

The history of how social-change organizations operate in the political arena gives us a clue as to why Gore and many others before him broke their promises and changed their positions. Over the years, many environmental organizations have kept quiet during elections because "we didn't want to hurt our candidate." Groups have ignored or even supported bad platforms because they wanted to make sure they had access if the candidate was elected. And some environmental leaders have pleaded with local people not to protest or disrupt the "good" candidate's rallies and campaign headquarters. We just roll over because some people think the risk of Democrats losing to Republicans is too high for us to stand our ground.

For example, in October 1996, one month before the presidential election, more than 100 groups from around the country wanted to place a full page ad in *USA Today* asking President Clinton to evacuate 358 families living on top of a severely contaminated site in Florida. But most of the large mainstream environmental organizations refused to sign on, arguing that such an ad could seriously wound the Clinton re-election campaign in Florida. Directors of these organizations personally called me, warning that "we need to be careful about criticizing Clinton and we don't want to give ammunition to the other side." But the ad ran, the community was given resources to evacuate, and Clinton didn't lose.

The social justice movement is caught in an all too predictable cycle—"play nice" during campaigns and then make excuses for the broken promises and bad behavior of the officials we supported. We scratch our heads, wondering why officials we supported continue to sell us out on the many issues we care about. If we want to take that route again this election year and into the next administration, then we should do as Jeffrey St. Clair suggests and enter a "protest" vote for Ralph Nader, or just vote for Gore and pray for the best.

But there is third way. I suggest that we play hardball throughout the campaign and into the new administration. We need to let Gore know that if he wants to be elected, then he needs to earn our votes, not just assume that we'll continue the failed game of supporting candidates who later sell us out. Nader doesn't have to serve as a receptacle in which to dump protest votes at the end of the campaign. He can play a critical role by raising the bar of what is discussed in the campaign and by forcing the other candidates to talk about the issues that matter to us. He could make the incinerator in East Liverpool a campaign issue. If Gore felt enough public pressure from Nader and groups across the country, he'd see to it that the incinerator was shut down before November. In doing so, he could start to earn our votes.

Nader could turn into the John McCain of the general election—with our help. He could raise the issues of campaign finance reform, gun control, genetic engineering and the effect of environmental chemicals on children's health. Nader's candidacy provides the opportunity—that we would be foolish to ignore—to force Gore and Bush to address the issues we care about during the campaign.

After all, what do we win when we settle for someone who betrays us, or disengage and miss the opportunity for public discussion of issues during the campaign?

St. Clair is right about Gore's record, however his answer to the problem will only give us four more years of the same. We need a new approach. We need to stop being afraid to demand what we want from candidates. Let's counter big money and business as usual with smart, ground-level organizing that demands accountability on our issues for every candidate for every office. ■

Lois Marie Gibbs is the executive director of the Center for Health, Environment and Justice.

We can't disengage from the process—we need to stop being afraid to demand what we want.

Full Metal Racket

By Bill Boisvert

Nightmare. Quagmire. Trauma. Disgrace. In the pundit's thesaurus, these are the entries that appear under "Vietnam." But Michael Lind wants to change that. Lind thinks that Vietnam was our finest hour, and that the architects of the war are role

Vietnam: The Necessary War

By Michael Lind

The Free Press

314 pages, \$25

American Tragedy: Kennedy, Johnson, and the Origins of the Vietnam War

By David Kaiser

Harvard University Press

566 pages, \$29.95

models for American foreign policy-makers. For Vietnam is not just our past, it's our future. Lind envisions a 21st century full of Vietnams—protracted, open-ended wars, poised nerve-wrackingly on a tightrope between escalation and pull-out, fizzling out in an indecisive quest for peace with honor. He doesn't shudder at the prospect, he welcomes it. The world is a quagmire, he says, so get in and wallow.

Lind is the ubiquitous pundit of the American Middle, having invented the term "overclass" to excoriate the privileged and distance himself from his own conservative past. Lind also has a master's degree in international relations. *Vietnam: The Necessary War* is the result, a revisionist rebuke to the "stale orthodoxies of the left and the right" that recapitulates his trademark populist triangulation in a geopolitical setting. As Lind freely admits, his "reinterpretation" is really an endorsement of the war as fought by "Cold War liberalism," that strange hybrid of strident anti-Communism and niggling cost-benefit analyses. Thus, Lind believes that we should have intervened in Vietnam—and

that, having bitten off more than we could chew, we should then have gotten out. He sees the Vietnam policy of Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon as the authentic expression of the American Middle, which hated Communism, and hated anti-war protesters even more, but shied away from high body counts.

Cold War liberalism was a much-maligned credo: The left denounced its interventionism, the right despised its vacillation and everyone shivered at its Strangelovian cult of icily bureaucratic destruction. But faced with a demonic but nuclear-armed Communist bloc, Lind thinks that America needed just such a foreign policy, imbued with militant principles yet ready to sacrifice them when the going got tough. In trying to defend both its anti-Communist zealotry and its cold-blooded realpolitik, Lind ends

up demonstrating just how incoherent Cold War liberalism really was.

Accepting without question the ideological framework of Cold War planners, Lind says that the war in Indochina was the climactic chapter in the Soviet drive for world domination. Not that anything tangible was at stake, he concedes, since there was never any question of the Communist bloc actually conquering Western Europe or Japan, much less the United States. America's interests were purely symbolic—but in the world of international relations, perceptions are the only reality: "What was primarily at stake in Vietnam for the United States was its global reputation as a military superpower and as a reliable ally." This was known as "credibility" back when Nixon invoked the specter of the "pitiful, helpless giant" and LBJ warned that the world might think "we're yellow and don't mean what we say" if we abandoned the war.

Like Nixon and Johnson, Lind hangs his entire argument on the self-pitying brutality of this banal idea, but gussies it up with international relations jargon about "reputational logic" and "symbolic logic" and, most grotesquely, *Bündnisfähigkeit*, an international relations term (meaning "alliance-worthiness") that perfectly captures the turgidity of Lind's writing and thinking. In Lind's retelling of the planners' doomsday scenario, defeat in Vietnam would eclipse America's *Bündnisfähigkeit* so irreparably as to set off a "global bandwagon effect" in which the world would rally to the Kremlin and Western Europe and Japan would become "Finlandized," which would mean ... well it wouldn't mean anything in particular, except that the Soviet Union would be "top dog."

All of this gives new meaning to the term "counter-factual history." After all, America *did* lose the war, yet it was the Soviet bloc that collapsed. Lind's attempts to rehabilitate the strategic rationale behind Vietnam policy end up discrediting it still further. There is



MARK JURY

little point in debating Lind's geo-political conceits; they basically refute themselves. But his reductionist view of history as nothing but the tectonic collision of superpower blocs has more serious consequences when we turn to *The Necessary War's* main topic. Insisting that everywhere one goes in the Third World the story is always the same, Lind comes up with a cartoonish misrepresentation of the Vietnam conflict itself.

Lind's few criticisms of Vietnam policy are narrowly technical, in keeping with Cold War liberalism's spirit of think-tank wonkery. He thinks America should have left the war after 20,000 or so Americans had been killed, before the Tet Offensive caused public disenchantment with the war to balloon into a countercultural revolution. (He deduces from a comparative study of anti-Communist interventions that this is the number of dead the American people will tolerate before growing impatient.)

He also believes that with the right mix of counter-insurgency tactics, America might have won the war before the crossover point of 20,000 dead had been reached. His argument echoes a Vietnam-era "military humanist" critique voiced by both soldiers and civilian experts, who criticized the U.S. Army for pursuing a conventional war in which large enemy units were to be obliterated by American artillery and air strikes. This was bound to fail, since the Communist guerrillas easily eluded the ponderous American war machine.

The United States thus let victory slip through its fingers. Quoting Mao, Lind notes that the key to beating guerrillas is to separate them from the population that supplies them with food, recruits and intelligence. Instead of trying to annihilate the Viet Cong in set-piece battles, the United States should have dispersed its soldiers in small units stationed permanently in Vietnamese villages, where they would "provide security" by patrolling incessantly for Viet Cong infiltrators and carrying out helpful development projects. Cut off from the peasantry, the Viet Cong would have withered on the vine.

Lind's disavowal of carpet-bombing is commendable, but there's reason to doubt the outcome of his alternative, the

**The left denounced
Cold War liberalism's
interventionism; the
right despised its
vacillation; and
everyone shivered at
its Strangelovian cult
of icily bureaucratic
destruction.**

small-unit guerrilla warfare of which the Vietcong were past masters. Far from representing a missed opportunity, the "pacification" approach (as Lind calls it) was pursued with a vengeance. Vietnamese villages were swamped with exactly the sort of militarized "hearts and minds" initiatives Lind favors—Civic Action projects, Armed Propaganda Teams, Green Berets who vaccinated kids by day and battled guerrillas by night. Hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese militia were stationed in villages to root out Viet Cong infiltrators, and whole districts were relocated to strategic hamlets where peasants were "separated" from insurgents by barbed wire. There was indeed a small unit war in the villages, fought at night between the Viet Cong and beleaguered American and South Vietnamese outposts, marked by the usual hysterical overuse of American firepower. Thanks to the many horrific encounters between Vietnamese peasants and their trigger-happy GI protectors, "pacification" was one of the more sinister euphemisms to come out of the war.

Lind all but ignores this brutal history and resolutely denies any political dimension to the war that might have impeded the textbook application of counter-insurgency technique. In this he stridently parts company with an historical consensus that acknowledges the Communists managed to build a base of resilient popular support by harnessing the peasants' authentic demands for land reform and social revolution. It's otherwise hard to explain how the vastly

outnumbered and outgunned Communists withstood the U.S. and South Vietnamese armies, which had well over a million men at the height of the war to the Communists' 300,000, according to Lind's own figures.

In this context, the American military's sledgehammer tactics were perhaps more realistic than Lind-style community policing, with its quixotic notion of "protecting" villages against guerrillas who had the active support of many of the villagers themselves. As the historical record makes clear, the hallmark of American strategy was the deployment of B-52s, napalm and helicopter gunships not against large enemy units, but against incongruously tiny units—straw huts, farm animals, a solitary figure trudging across a paddy. The result was to make life in much of the countryside more or less untenable, as millions of peasants fled free-fire zones and "harassment and interdiction" bombardments into towns and refugee camps. The American mixture of combat, reprisals against civilians and forced population transfer is itself a time-honored counter-insurgency strategy, familiar to unpopular occupation armies since the Romans pacified Palestine, and one with deep roots in earlier American conflicts with Indians and anti-colonial insurgents.

But to Lind, all talk of politics is a waste of time, wedded as he is to the Manichean structures of Cold War rhetoric. Ho Chi Minh, a "charter member" of the "international communist conspiracy," was a mere "minor clone" of the tyrants in Beijing and Moscow. (Lind is fond of Kremlin Gothic: "In a Georgian accent tinged with sarcasm, Stalin said to the president of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, 'How can you ask for my instructions?' ") The Viet Cong owed their staying power to Ho's ruthlessness in "terrorizing the North Vietnamese population into docility" and willingness "to impose horrendous costs on [his] unfree subjects" (in the form of American bombing raids). Rarely appearing in Lind's book without the adjectives "Stalinist" and "totalitarian" lurking in the vicinity, the Vietnamese Communists are nearly featureless effigies of despotism, just so many red arrows emanating from a map of China.

Since the Communist insurgency is fully explained by the presence of evil in the world, American intervention was by definition a “just war.”

Lind sums up his analysis with an extended comparison between the Vietnam War and the Korean War—another Cold War battle where, by his own unsparing account, millions of civilians died and the U.S. bombed an entire country flat to prop up an unpopular dictatorship. His point: If you liked Korea, you should love Vietnam. It’s a strange analogy, since it establishes a gruesome M.O. that undermines his case for American interventionism. And as much as it glosses over a myriad of historical differences, it still raises questions Lind should ponder. After three years in Korea, the United States forced a stalemate and left a South Korean regime able to hold its own against the North. Why not in Vietnam? Could it be because the Communists were *politically* stronger in Vietnam?

Lind tacitly argues that South Vietnam was a South Korea in the making. To be sure, Communist Vietnam today is a dictatorship, one that should remind us of the difference between national liberation and human liberation. But while it isn’t South Korea, it isn’t North Korea either. Stalinism reigns, but it’s market Stalinism—plenty of Nike sweatshops and cybercafes, and no militant South Korean-style trade unions to throw sand in the gears of global economic integration. The Vietnamese Communists seem more like the IMF’s cat’s-paw than Stalin’s. Who knows, maybe if the United States had stayed out of Vietnam the country would be a free-market paradise today. Wherever Vietnam ended up, it could have gotten there without being carpet-bombed and defoliated.

For a useful corrective to Lind, turn to David Kaiser’s new book, *American Tragedy: Kennedy, Johnson, and the Origins of the Vietnam War*. Kaiser, a professor of strategy and policy at the Naval

War College, bases his account of Vietnam policy-making not on the abstractions of international relations theory but on an exhaustive examination of the documentary record. The portrait he paints of Cold War liberalism is a frightening one.

Kaiser shows that intervention was by no means the only policy option. Some American advisers foresaw a bloody debacle in Vietnam; America’s show of

and virtually every one of them concluded that the United States would have to use nuclear weapons to defeat the Vietnamese Communists. Making a virtue of necessity, planners began to think up ever more mundane tasks that could be conveniently accomplished with nukes, like interdicting the trickle of bicycle rickshaws moving down the Ho Chi Minh trail. One scheme even recommended using nuclear weapons as defoliants. Of course, these contingency plans were never carried out, but they highlight just how unrealistic, even crazed, the assumptions of Cold War planners were. *American Tragedy* portrays a divided and uncertain policy-making establishment, which misconstrued the situation in South Vietnam and did serious harm to America’s standing in the world. Kaiser’s reconstruction of the lies surrounding the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution illuminates the folly of Lind’s unswerving faith in these people.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES



President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles receive South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1957.

force also provoked strenuous opposition from its allies. De Gaulle and other European leaders urged the United States to stay out of the civil war in South Vietnam, warning that intervention would undermine, not bolster, the West’s reputation in the Third World. Kaiser claims that a successful alternative to intervention in Indochina was forged by the Kennedy administration, which backed a neutral political settlement in Laos to quiet the Communist Pathet Lao insurgency there. Unfortunately, Kaiser says, Johnson then reverted to the interventionist policies of the Eisenhower administration.

One striking aspect of the planning record amassed by Kaiser is the central role nuclear weapons played in U.S. government thinking. Periodic planning scenarios, dating from the 1954 Geneva Accords right up to Johnson’s 1965 decision to send ground troops, were undertaken to flesh out policy options,

him somewhat at sea when it comes to the political realities of the war. Like Lind, Kaiser dwells on the might-have-beens of counterinsurgency—but with even less justification, since he quite thoroughly documents the plethora of tried-and-failed counterinsurgency programs and the lavish effort expended on them. Somehow, the best laid plans of counterinsurgency advisers always miscarried—because of underfunding, or lack of training, because strategic hamlets had been spaced too far apart, or because some U.S. officials disparaged them.

But Kaiser’s excuses are unconvincing. Surely the Viet Cong faced even worse budget constraints, and had to do without the advice of elite unconventional warfare specialists; yet the insurgency flourished. The real problem, as his book makes perfectly clear, was the brutality and corruption of the South Vietnamese regime and the unwillingness of its soldiers, despite outnumbering the Viet

Cong 15 to 1 in the early stages of the war, to fight in earnest on its behalf. While noting the persistent demoralization of South Vietnamese soldiers as compared to their “determined” Viet Cong adversaries, Kaiser doesn’t ponder what that might imply about the relative political appeal of the two sides.

Kaiser’s flaws aside, the evidence in his book stands as further vindication for the American anti-war movement—which Lind feels had nothing to do with the war itself. Lind offers an “ethnoregionalist” account, according to which American politics is but a long clash between the various cultural styles, ultimately derived from 17th-century Britain, of groups of colonial settlers. On one side of the fault line lies the moralistic Puritan and Quaker culture of “Greater New England” (stretching all the way to California), which opposes foreign wars in the same way it opposes every social blemish, from slavery to smoking. On the other is the tradition-bound, militaristic “culture of honor” of Appalachia and the Deep South, where people respond with violence to every personal slight—of which Communist insurrection is the worst kind. In short, Yankees opposed the Vietnam war because they *always* oppose wars (Yankee poet Robert Lowell even opposed World War II!); Southerners supported it because they *always* support wars.

Within this larger antagonism there are other ethnoregional influences, which necessitate ever more convoluted epicycles of essentialist reasoning on Lind’s part. Blacks, although formed by the Southern culture of honor, opposed the war because they are historically “alienated.” Irish Catholics—even the Boston Irish—supported the war. (Greater New England no longer includes New England proper, Lind observes.) Then there are the Jewish red-diaper babies, quintessential outside agitators (“apart from Jews, few American students in the sixties were radical”) whose sympathies were inherited from their Central European socialist forebears.

In Lind’s ethnoregionalist view, principled opposition to the war—which he dismisses as a mass of “disinformation” foisted on pacifist dupes by Communist propagandists—was as futile as it was un-American. All the mobilizations and teach-ins and draft card burnings and GI coffee-houses were but inconsequential gestures of overclass contempt for the silent majority, who responded in kind.



President Johnson meets with his war planners shortly after the 1964 election.

Quoting an old Boston-Irish pol—“My people want to end the war, and shoot the draft dodgers”—Lind hears America sounding off in the tones of omnidirectional backlash that he considers the only permanent political legacy of the ’60s.

But one outgrowth of ’60s politics was widespread outrage at the use of demonizing anti-Communist rhetoric as a smokescreen for cynical, 20,000-dead-and-cut-your-losses exercises in realpolitik. One hopes then that Lind’s ineptly reasoned and feebly supported apologia will drive the last nail into the coffin of Cold War liberalism. Yet I am filled with foreboding at what this book may portend. It is framed by an alarming discussion of the lessons of Vietnam, particularly as they apply to the Kosovo war—the main lesson being that America needs to toughen up. Lind excoriates Bill Clinton, Vietnam draft dodger, for ruling out the use of ground troops (“the single greatest act

of incompetence ever committed” by a president). But he really blasts the cowardice of the American people and their reluctance to sanction high casualties in the course of “necessary war on behalf of hegemonic credibility or alliance-worthiness.” To remedy this, he advocates the use of “conditional” declarations of war—modeled on the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution—which would give the president a blank check to conduct military operations for indefinite, perhaps decades-long, periods. He also recommends the imposition of censorship (“voters ... do not need to know the details of foreign policy”) and the prosecution of anti-war activists for treason. Thus, Lind would have us demolish our civil liberties in order to safeguard our *Bündnisfähigkeit*.

This strange, possibly dangerous book cries out for explanation, and while I hate to psychoanalyze, it’s hard not to see some masculinity issues involved. Lind opens the book with a quote from Stalin, whom he regards as an almost Tocquevillean authority on America’s national character: “Americans don’t know how to fight. ... They are fighting little Korea, and already people are weeping in the USA.” Stalin’s taunt apparently hit home with Lind, whose entire worldview seems to have been erected in response to it. Hence his acute sensitivity to the pain of being perceived as yellow or pitiful, and his championing of the culture of honor against the unmanful weeping of Northern moralists. Unfortunately, Lind’s eccentricities are also the longstanding obsessions of U.S. policy-makers. Indeed, Cold War liberalism is perhaps best understood as a global projection of the culture of honor of the street gang or the prison yard, seeing everywhere a world where one’s rep is all that matters, where every dis must be met with maximal violence lest some other country make America its bitch.

Greater New Englanders of the world, keep your placards at the ready. ■

Bill Boisvert is a writer in New York and a frequent contributor to *In These Times*.

Horror Show

By Roane Carey

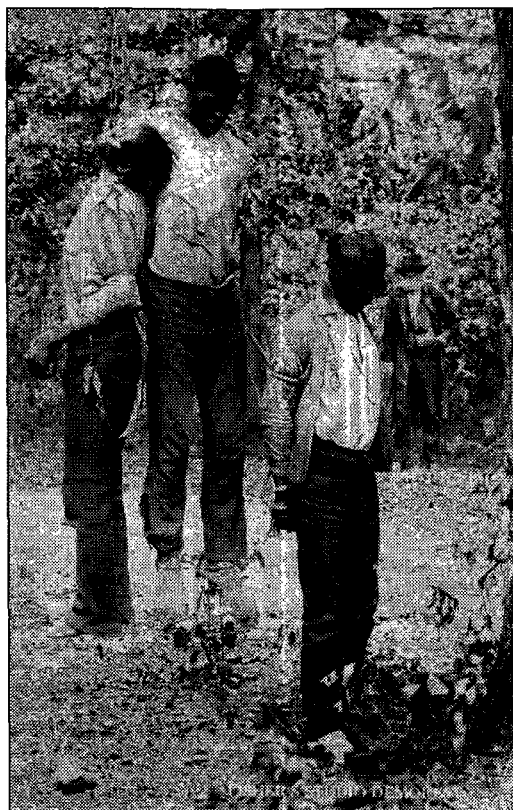
If history is, in part, a nightmare from which we are trying to awake, then the American nightmare is the history of our race relations. A small piece of that nightmare was on view recently at Manhattan's Roth Horowitz art gallery, in the form of several dozen photographs of lynchings. Word of the show quickly spread, and it became something of a sensation, with long

Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America
 Edited by James Allen
 Twin Palms Publishers
 209 pages, \$60

lines snaking out onto the cold winter sidewalk. So great was public interest, in fact, that even before the exhibition closed in February the New-York Historical Society had decided to bring the collection to its museum, where it will be shown from March 14 to July 9.

In his essay accompanying the book *Without Sanctuary*, whose photographs form the basis of the two exhibitions, Leon Litwack says that between 1882 and 1968 some 5,000 people were lynched, most of them from the South in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the victims overwhelmingly African-American. The charges against them varied from serious crimes to merely showing disrespect; in all cases, the bottom line was that in the wake of Reconstruction, any challenge or perceived challenge to white supremacy was considered grounds for mob murder.

One shocking aspect of these lynchings—and no doubt one of the reasons crowds were drawn to the Roth Horowitz gallery—is the fact that so many of them were public spectacles carried out with the full approval of community leaders. Often thousands attended, with schools let out so parents could bring their children to watch. “The use of the camera to memorialize lynchings,” Litwack says, “testified to their openness and to the self-righteousness that animated the participants.” The photos were often turned



Postcard of the lynching of Jim Redmond, Gus Roberson and Bob Addison, May 17, 1892, Habersham County, Georgia.

into postcards, which were traded and sold. It's difficult to say what's more gruesome about these pictures, the sight of the victims—many of them hideously tortured and mutilated before being killed—or that of the onlookers: grinning, self-satisfied, jostling to get into the frame.

What good does it do to look at these photos? Is it really true, as Litwack says, that “they must be examined if we are to understand how normal men and women could live with, participate in, and defend such atrocities, even reinterpret them so they would not see themselves or be perceived as less than civilized”? Or is this just a particularly grotesque kind of voyeurism that, however disguised as pity or outrage, revels in black victimization? The question poses itself in a different way when one examines the book. Why does a publisher of “top-quality photography books in

sheet-fed gravure,” as Twin Palms bills itself, reproduce these tawdry photos on sewn pages in a pricey coffee-table edition? Are we meant to flip through the book with guests during weekend social calls?

I'm not convinced there is a good purpose to memorializing such tortures, but if there is one it may lie in the proof it furnishes that the most obscene Jim Crow violence—far from being the furtive nighttime rampages of drunken hoodlums—was sanctioned at the highest levels of society. Keep this in mind the next time a gracious Southern gentleman tells you he means no disrespect to black folks when he strives to preserve his “heritage.”

How close is white America today to the matter-of-fact sadists in these photos? Unfortunately, the echoes are all around us. They are in the three white Texas men who tied James Byrd to a truck two years ago and dragged him to his death for sport. They're in the white New York cop who ritually tortured Abner Louima in 1997 because he didn't show the proper deference to authority. They're in the fact that African-Americans convicted of the same crimes as whites do harder and longer time in prison, and are sentenced to death at rates far disproportionate to that of whites. They're in the lavish encomiums heaped on books like Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein's *The Bell Curve*, which purports to demonstrate black genetic inferiority. Hilton Als, who contributes an essay to *Without Sanctuary*, writes, “Fact is, if you are even half-way colored and male in America, the dead heads hanging from the trees in these pictures, and the dead eyes or grins surrounding them, it's not too hard to imagine how this is your life too, as it were. You can feel it every time you cross the street to avoid worrying a white woman to death or false accusations of rape, or every time your car breaks down anywhere in America.”

The thread from that white America to this white America is sewn into the actions of our most powerful politicians, from George W. Bush's salute to the bigots of Bob Jones University to John

McCain's embrace of the most hard-line sympathizers of the old Confederacy through the choice of his South Carolina campaign consultant, Richard Quinn. Both candidates waffled on the issue of the Confederate battle flag, whose presence above the Capitol dome in Columbia is a message to blacks that their humanity is still deemed provisional. The statues of Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson and Jefferson Davis, which disgrace towns all over the South, give the clearest indication that too many of its inhabitants still cherish the old order. The enthusiasm for these odious emblems of human degradation was evident in a March 4 rally of several thousand people in Montgomery, Alabama, who called for officials to once again fly the battle flag, our Nazi swastika, above that state's Capitol dome.

In his new book, *The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks*, Randall Robinson points out that one can search the great Washington monuments in vain for any sign of honor to the African-Americans who helped build this country, although we do have statues and monuments to slaveowners like Jefferson and Washington. We can spend tens of millions of federal dollars mourning the Nazi mass murder of Jews in Europe—a hell that took place thousands of miles from our shores—and yet have almost nothing to mark 246 years of slavery and another century of near slavery right here in America. How would we feel if Germany built a grand museum in Berlin decrying the Middle Passage and the bondage of Africans in America? Many would no doubt be outraged, but it would teach us something about our own self-righteousness and historical amnesia. Robinson stands on solid ground when he claims that “the black holocaust is far and away the most heinous human rights crime visited upon any group of people in the world over the last five hundred years.” When “every artifact of the victims’ past cultures, every custom, every ritual, every god, every language” is torn away and erased, “it produces its victims ad infinitum.”

African-Americans have from time to time made the case for reparations, to no avail. In 1993 Michigan Rep. John Conyers submitted a bill

merely advocating a commission to study the effects of slavery and make appropriate recommendations to Congress for remedies. It received only 28 co-sponsors, 18 of them black, and never made it out of committee (hardly surprising, given that we're in an era that rejects even the Band-Aid of affirmative action). A similar resolution that year by the Organization of African Unity, calling upon the international community to recognize the vast debt owed to Africa because of slavery and colonialism, was mostly ignored. Robinson says the crime of slavery “is so unprecedentedly massive that it would require some form of collective insanity not to see it and its living victims.” Clearly, the signs of dementia are everywhere.

There have been some small, grudging gestures of acknowledgment recently. A few years ago, the State of Florida paid

reparations to the survivors of a white race riot that destroyed the town of Rosewood and killed at least six. This past February, a commission established by the Oklahoma legislature recommended the payment of reparations to the survivors of the 1921 riot in Tulsa, in which a ravening white mob murdered up to 300 blacks. Also in February, the victim of a 1906 lynching in Chattanooga, Tennessee, who was falsely accused of rape, was finally exonerated; the case was spurred on in part because of the publicity surrounding the Roth Horowitz gallery show. These are mere tokens of recognition, pallid gestures in the wake of four centuries of horror. But even if the photographs in *Without Sanctuary* do no more than move us to own up to a fraction of that horror, they will have served a useful purpose. ■

Roane Carey is copy chief of *The Nation*.

Spinning Wheels

By Joshua Rothkopf

Mission to Mars, the new Brian De Palma film, starts with a sick joke in its first shot: a rocket zooms upward against a picture-perfect blue sky after we hear the countdown—and suddenly explodes into streaming colored plumes. The camera drops and we're actually at a backyard barbecue with fireworks; some kids cheer as another rocket is readied.

Invoking the *Challenger* disaster for laughs takes a ghoulish impudence, and De Palma is certainly the man for the job. (Sonically, he gives the burst a cute little pop.) But as if smacked into penance for being rude, he settles down almost immediately to the kind of grave, chest-thumping melodrama I was afraid of—a movie about majestic tubular spacecraft and the proud folk that pilot them; eventually, they make it to Mars and discover the standard mysteries of life. I wish De Palma's nerve stuck around longer to steer this monolithic nothing of a picture slightly off its calculated course. Instead he willingly straps himself down to the expensive-looking hardware, allowing his personality to float away in zero gravity.

A formerly outrageous director once allowed to make full-length fever dreams, then merely the occasional zesty sequence, De Palma finally has become Robert Wise.

The feel of this production is huge and showy, but sets are still underutilized. De Palma is so proud of his 50 acres of Martian terrain—sculpted in the dunes south of Vancouver and sprayed with thousands of gallons of “environmentally-friendly Mars Red latex paint”—that he forgets to show a single successful Mars landing, even though the scenario calls for at least two. This is more than wrongheaded; it's almost a tragedy. (What he chooses to ignore is the consummation of a global dream that may never actually happen except in the movies; his omission feels like contempt.) Apparently, he must have felt this was too easy, and instead rushes on to what he considers the meat of the story, a tired series of conventional sci-fi emergencies—oxygen-leaking hull breaches, alien dust dervishes and other mishaps. Putting his characters in jeopardy is what De Palma is most comfortable at, and he

lavishes these scenes with the cruel attentions of an expert torturer. But the screenplay (officially credited to three writers though the associate producer, *Silence of the Lambs* adapter Ted Tally, was probably one of several fourths) wants to resolve itself more grandly. De Palma can't do it justice; the film stumbles in grasping for something cosmic and ends up crucially undernourished. It's a big, red embarrassment.

him seem unstoppable. And *Scarface*, in all its profanity and coke-addled blood-letting, now reveals itself as the beacon to most American action filmmaking that followed (without the pungent satire). These were not socially responsible films; many thought De Palma was dangerous. He was that good.

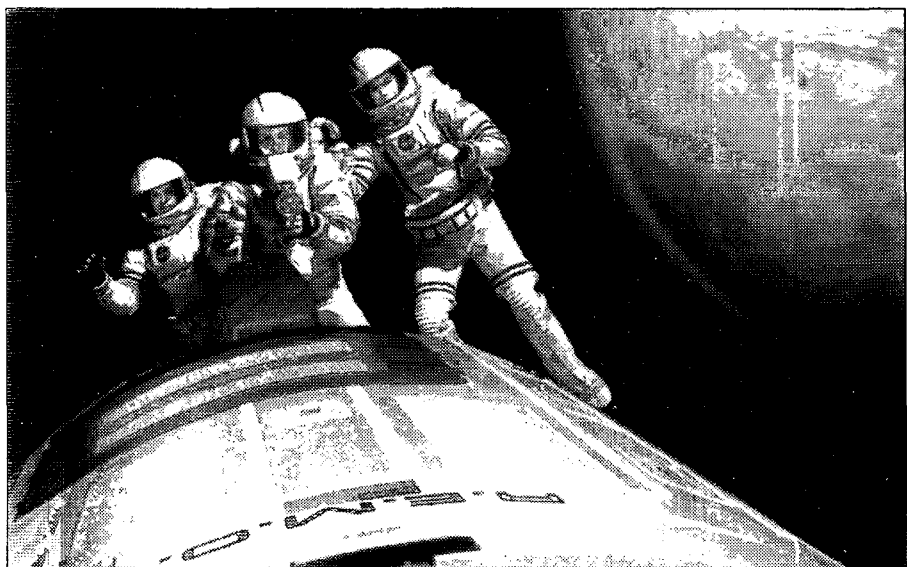
His fans were—and still are—cinema junkies, appreciators of visual brazenness in the context of so much timidity. Many

point where he started to lag behind his own frenzied highs. That film contains his most celebrated sequence, a deliriously extended gunfight on the marble steps of Chicago's Union Station that managed to improve upon even its source, Eisenstein's *Potemkin*. But it seemed sneaked in against the studio's wishes, and by then it was too late. When De Palma couldn't cut loose, he ceased to exist. *Bonfire of the Vanities* was a disaster. Retrenchments led to unwitting self-parody and repetition: *Carlito's Way* of *Scarface*, *Snake Eyes* of *Blow Out*. *Mission: Impossible* could have been made by a computer, and that's exactly what was required. De Palma was reportedly bullied by star Tom Cruise on the set, and it's hard to muster any sympathy for the director. These days, you pay to play and De Palma has paid mightily.

Much has already been made of *Mission to Mars*' indebtedness to sci-fi precedents, especially Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. But critics miss the point by lazily calling De Palma on theft. His failure is not one of originality but of fresh interpretation. (De Palma's notorious quoting of Hitchcock in the thrillers blinded most to his impressive feat of actually extending and refining that grammar.) So we see those slowly rotating space stations and the walking-on-the-ceiling trick, but it's not recontextualized or thought out differently. That's the problem. *2001* is rich with subtext in comparison; the Strauss waltz punctured the heroic technology with an intentional banality. Astronauts jogging around interiors like gerbils on a wheel compounded the comment about human inadequacy in the expanse of infinity. De Palma's take is nothing new.

He's ill-served by his composer, Ennio Morricone, who smothers us with operatic wistfulness: all heavenly choirs and swelling strings. The result is aching redundancy; it's a little too late for NASA-accurate wonderment. At one point the crew flips around weightlessly to a Van Halen song and all you think is, they sure hid the wires well.

I haven't said much about the acting—and you can probably guess why. De Palma has always, for better or worse, been the star of his films. It used to be you were so swept along by his daredevil confidence that it didn't matter much.



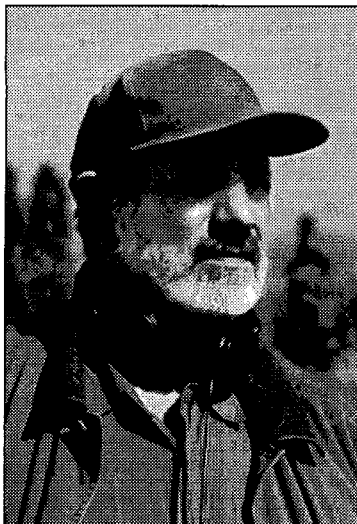
Lost in space.

De Palma has kept working for more than 30 years, but only the most mercenary appraiser can call this artistic perseverance against the system. (It's instructive to remember he was fired off his first Hollywood assignment, a Tommy Smothers vehicle; De Palma used to be a hothead.) I can't deny him his punchy victories though, sly expressions of his dissatisfied generation, the film brats of the '70s. These were entertainments that railed not through choice of excoriating subject (Coppola) or a plumbing of the deepest dregs of character (Scorsese), but with an equally charged visual language that now seems more metaphorically advanced. *Carrie* is pop horror that explodes with adolescent rage—it still connects with audiences. No one was so daringly silly then; De Palma's style was a perfect match. The thrillers angered many feminists, but would *Dressed to Kill* and *Body Double* have done so if their kineticism was less threateningly potent? *Blow Out* was an awakening to politics that made

film students, sipping the intoxicating flexibility of the medium for the first time, pass through a De Palma phase. (Some, now in directorial careers of their own, have gone on to mount public attempts at a critical re-evaluation of their idol: De Palma is to John Woo and Tarantino what Hitchcock was to Truffaut.) But is his early appeal just the cold flash of a perfected technique? The engagement goes deeper. There is emotion in De Palma's flagrancy; his best work feels untethered and gleefully irreverent. And while it might have been detached from seriousness—or even what was presumably the plot—it was not devoid of substance, which was, at its core, liberation. Those who might dismiss that achievement as just a penchant for luridness are too bound to notions of good taste and the literary snobbishness that values words over vibrant image-making; in truth, it was more than enough to inspire.

But on this score, De Palma has proven his own worst enemy: *The Untouchables* is the workmanlike turning

But when he's hobbled into servitude, the actors are stranded; he still can't pull off a simple conversation. De Palma has assembled fine talent here—many from the stage—only to saddle them with technobabble, pump up their muscles and send them off careening like plastic dolls. Gary Sinese suffers the greatest indignities of the script; he's a hot shot "stick jockey" yearning for a second chance to command a crew after losing his wife to cancer. Slicked



De Palma's older films were not socially responsible, and many thought he was dangerous. He was once that good.

down heavily with black-rimmed eyes and clammy stubble, Sinese looks terrible; he mumbles through a stylized rictus of mourning for the whole picture. Tim Robbins, as another astronaut, looks ferrety in his crewcut—it's a clenched-jaw performance. Maybe he's so constipated

fully undeveloped part that calls on him to be teary-eyed, black and little else. You'd think a brilliant scientist marooned alone on Mars for a year would have cracked the enigma that killed his crew, but the glory is saved for the stick jockey, who shows up and

because his wife is also on board; as played by Connie Nielsen, she can't even get off a good cry. If anything, the film is a cautionary tale about sending married couples into space.

They're sent on a rescue mission after receiving one of those desperate, static-filled transmissions from the first man on Mars; something bad has happened to his team. Don Cheadle, so impressively conflicted in *Boogie Nights* as the stud turned stereo salesman, plays this sole survivor, a shame-

figures it out in 10 minutes. Soon enough we're in one of those big white rooms favored by extraterrestrial interior decorators, and the computer-generated science lesson begins. The culmination of a 100-million mile journey is a cheesy movie about planetary evolution; these writers should get out more.

De Palma must have been stuck with this lulu of a finish; you can feel him squirm with the rest of us as a bulb-headed Martian cries a single tear. How can you junk a shot—even a terrible one—that's taken months of work by dozens of digital "artists"? You don't. This is always the problem with these canned effects, and it's one more bind that De Palma can do without. As always, the actors look confused as they exchange handshakes and nod mystically to what was added later. (In spacesuits, no one can feel you hug.) De Palma has reduced himself to one more committee member; he's quoted in the press packet as hoping his movie will inspire "some political candidate" to pick up the cause for space exploration. I'll settle for an honest director. ■

2000 Socialist Scholars Conference



ROCKIN' THE BOAT: BUILDING COALITIONS FOR A NEW CENTURY

March 31—April 2, 2000

Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY

199 Chambers Street

New York City

Join David Abdulah, Stanley Aronowitz, Charles Barron, Medea Benjamin, Playthel Benjamin, Marshall Berman, Terry Bisson, Elombe Brath, Pablo Gonzalez Casanova, Lynn Chancer, Richard Cloward, Bhairavi Desai, Martin Duberman, Eddie Ellis, Héctor Figueroa, Doug Henwood, Maurice Isserman, Boris Kagarlistskey, Maulana Karenga, Robin D.G. Kelley, Peter Kwong, Manning Marable, Robert McChesney, Leo Panitch, Frances Fox Piven, Danny Schechter, Bill Tabb, Lori Wallach, and Steffi Woolhandler.

Plus New York Theatrical Premiere of Howard Zinn's Play *Marx in Soho* and

Panel Debate: Is Intervention (N)ever Justified

with Bogdan Denitch and Ian Williams vs. Tariq Ali and Michael Löwy

For Information and schedule updates, visit SSC2000 webpage: www.socialistscholar.org

Phone: (212) 817-7868

HELP WANTED

WORK AT AN INDEPENDENT, progressive magazine this summer! *In These Times*, the award-winning alternative news-magazine, is looking for full-time interns for its Chicago office. **Web Intern:** The intern will have the unique opportunity of redesigning and expanding the *In These Times* Web site. Knowledge of HTML and programs such as Dreamweaver is absolutely necessary. Experience with Java and CGI scripting is preferred, but not required. A stipend will be provided. **Editorial Interns:** Interns should have a strong interest in progressive politics and independent publishing. Our interns factcheck, proofread and research articles. Depending on experience, the internship can culminate in editing or writing short pieces. The position is voluntary. Applicants should send a cover letter and resume to Kristin Kolb, e-mail: kolb@inthesetimes.com (no attachments please); address: 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave, Chicago, IL 60647.

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR: Teamster reform movement seeking energetic activist for communications coordinator position. Media, education, and organizing work in promotion of participatory union democracy. Good oral and written communication skills a must. Commitment to a progressive labor movement required. Spanish fluency a plus. Women

and people of color encouraged to apply. Send resume and references to: TDU, P.O. Box 10128, Detroit, MI 48210. 313-842-2600.

OFFICE MANAGER/ ASST. CONTROLLER/H.R. COORDINATOR. Love the "game" of business but looking for a company who cares more about "doing right" than making the owners wealthy? Frontier Geosciences, an environmental research and specialty analytical lab is looking for an individual with a unique combinations of skills, interests, and attitude for the above position. If interested please fax letter and resume to Ed Geiger (President) (206) 622-6870.

WANT TO JOIN A SUCCESSFUL organizing team and organize healthcare, non-profit, and public workers? SEIU, Local 715, a progressive growing union in Silicon Valley, California, is hiring union organizers. Great salary and benefits. Must be willing to work long hours. People of color, women, and bilingual people encouraged to apply. Fax resume to Local 715, attention Greg Pullman, at (408) 954-1538.

TRAVEL

PALESTINE—VOYAGES WITH A VISION June 20-30, 2000. Visit Palestine's cities, villages, refugee camps. Explore a society engaged in powerful debates about everything from Islam and feminism to politics and nation building. Cost: \$2,525. Includes

round-trip airfare from NY, hotel, breakfast, translation, guide, program. Send \$200 per person deposit to reserve by May 25 to: MADRE, 121 West 27th Street, Room 301 New York, NY 10001 ph: (212) 627-0444; fx: (212) 675-3704; madre@igc.org Ask about other MADRE trips, including Cuba & Guatemala.

GRANTS

GRANTS \$500-\$5000 to INDIVIDUAL WOMEN AGE 54+ for projects in any field that enrich and empower the lives of adult women. Write for instructions (include SASE). The Thanks Be To Grandmother Winifred Foundation/ITT, PO Box 1449, Wainscott, NY 11975.

DISCUSSION GROUPS

EMAIL DISCUSSION GROUP forming. Send an Email to: ProgressiveTalk-subscribe@onelist.com

PETITIONS

CITIZENS UNITE! to regain control over Congress! Please sign petition for a NATIONAL INITIATIVE/REFERENDUM process at www.unitedpeople.org or write for petition packet at United People, P.O. Box 102276, Denver, CO 80250-2276

ART EVENTS

COUNTER PRODUCTIVE INDUSTRIES (CPI) invites you to an innovative exhibition/art campaign. Counter Productive Industries, a collaboration of artists and art administrators, is an art campaign designed to critique market driven production and the "pro-

TRUE LEFT TELEVISION

Non-profit public access activist seeks related correspondence. Also seeks progressive videos for broadcast. Especially "The Nazi Connection," "We Do The Work," "The Panama Deception," media criticism. **DC LARSON/TRUE LEFT TELEVISION** 516 W. 8th St. Waterloo, IA 50702 319-233-1216

Check out
IN THESE TIMES
on the Web at
www.inthesetimes.com

Announcing the republication of

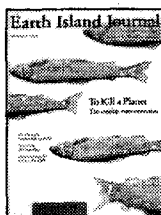
The Myth of the Soul Clarence Darrow

Devastating treatise against belief in life after death by America's great liberal lawyer and freethinker.

booklet \$6.00 ppd. (USA)

INDEPENDENT PUBLICATIONS, P.O. BOX 102,
RIDGEFIELD, NJ 07657

Earth Island Journal



Get the whole picture! "Earth Island Journal" is unparalleled in its ability to illuminate ecological dimensions of contemporary science, politics and culture."

—*Time Reader*

"The liveliest magazine covering the environment."

—*In These Times*

International reporting, tips for activist-readers. Published by David Brower's Earth Island Institute, your membership supports over 30 critical environmental projects.

Special offer!

First year (4 issues) \$15
(415)788-3666
www.earthisland.org



Read The Progressive Populist

A Journal from the Heartland with alternative news and views from Jim Hightower, Molly Ivins, Ralph Nader, Jesse Jackson, other muckrakers, agitators and the best of the nation's alternative press. . . . An antidote for your daily news. . . . Deflating pompous plutocrats since 1995.

Only \$29.95 for 22 issues.

For a free sample copy,
call toll-free 1-800-205-7067
or see www.populist.com

duction of progress." Launched at the grounds of 1926 Exhibition Studies Space, 35 local and international artists will produce art utilizing the tools of mass-market production during the dates April 5 - 15, 2000. CPI's headquarters is at the 1926 Exhibition Studies Space at 1926 North Halsted, Chicago, with artwork being distributed and performed throughout the city. An opening reception will take place at the 1926 Exhibition Studies Space on Friday April 7, from 6 to 8 p.m. For more details about CPI's art campaign e-mail us at counterproductive@hotmail.com or call (773) 665-4802. You can also visit our web site at www.counterproductiveindustries.com

PERSONALS

CONCERNED SINGLES NEWSLETTER

links compatible singles who care about peace, social justice, gender equity, racism and the environment. *Nationwide. Since 1984. All ages.*
FREE SAMPLE: Box 444-IT, Lenox Dale, MA 01242, (413) 445-6309; or at <http://www.concernedsingles.com>

PUBLICATIONS

IN THESE TIMES Back Issues—Did you miss a recent issue? Don't worry. Back issues of ITT are available for just \$3 each in the U.S.; \$5 each overseas. Send check or money order to In These Times, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.

POPULIST, TAX-FREE Republic, Separate, Equal, Safe—North American Reader: www.knownet.net/Reader.

-Left Bank Distribution-

Labor, Anarchist & Situationist books, radical culture and politics. Worker owned collective since 1973. Send \$2 for our 90 page catalog to: 1004 Turner Way E, Seattle, WA 98112 or order online at <http://www.leftbankbooks.com>

Read:

Capitalism

Communism and the Jew

www.weisbord.org

Class Struggle

Volume 5 Number 1

December 1935

SUBSCRIBE TO
In These Times
1-800-827-0270

In These Times CLASSIFIED ADS

WORK LIKE YOUR OWN SALES FORCE.

WORD RATES:

95¢ per word / 1-2 issues
85¢ per word / 3-5 issues
80¢ per word / 6-9 issues
75¢ per word / 10-19 issues
65¢ per word / 20 + issues

DISPLAY INCH RATES:

\$30 per inch / 1-2 issues
\$28 per inch / 3-5 issues
\$26 per inch / 6-9 issues
\$24 per inch / 10-19 issues
\$22 per inch / 20 + issues

Classified ads must be prepaid with check, VISA or MasterCard.

To advertise, contact:

Steve Anderson, Advertising Director

IN THESE TIMES

2040 N. Milwaukee Ave.,
Chicago, IL 60647

p:773-772-0100 x225

f:773-772-4180

anderson@inthesetimes.com

Enclosed is my check for \$_____ for _____ issue(s).

Please indicate desired heading _____

Advertiser _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

SYLVIA



By Nicole Hollander



Continued from page 38

readers for whom grocery story tabloids and violence on television and in films have become routine."

Like the media it apes, none of this children's literature has anything to say about actual social conditions. Even in the ghetto-based dramas, like *Babylon Boyz* by Jess Mowry, the problems individual characters face are personal. But in this case the personal is not political, or at least not "politically correct." In the world of girls' literature, where there is no higher calling than having a boyfriend. Francine Pascal, creator of the *Sweet Valley Twins* series—120 million in print—has a stable of writers who churn out at least one book a month, with titles like *The Boyfriend Game* (number 113).

While heartbreak won't kill you, chronic illness will. The ultimate in disease-of-the-month books are the 40 teenage life-and-death quasi-romances by Lurlene McDaniels, including *Too Young to Die*, *Sixteen and Dying* and *Mother Help Me Live*. McDaniels knows that even on chemo, emaciated and hair-free, being kissed is everything. In *Six Months to Live*, 13-year-old Dawn Rochelle discovers she has leukemia, a disease that, thanks to a period of remission, takes this book and three sequels to run its course.

Other American children's literature is inhabited by a collection of dysfunctional, unhappy characters that could have come straight from a social worker's files. The idea seems to be to teach grim reality lessons to those kids who might be having a good childhood.

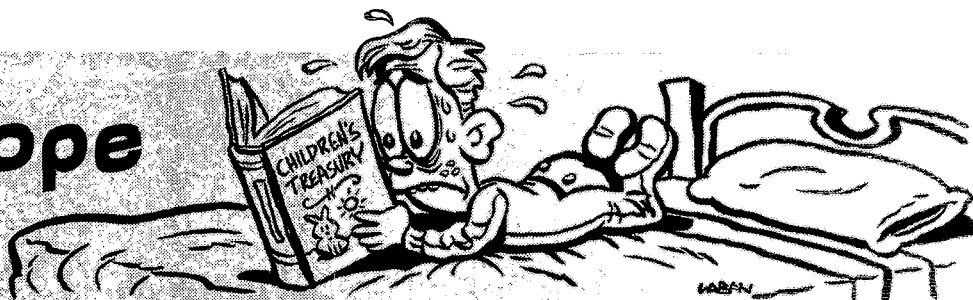
Judy Blume broke down the door when she wrote about divorce. The authors who followed have used the word processor as a

wrecking ball to pulverize the entire house. The number of children's books that feature dead and dying parents, grandparents and assorted siblings who hide horrible secrets, will make any member of the family fear their days are numbered. Those family members who are alive and well are usually abusive, abused or substance abusers. *The Storm's Crossing* by Reanne S. Singer, for example, tells the story of a 12-year-old girl sexually abused by her father. As the reviewer for *The Horn Book*, the magazine of children's literature observed, "Forced dialogue and an occasionally plodding pace won't prevent readers from painfully empathizing."

Is it any wonder that J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books have spent months on the *New York Times* bestseller list? Although they deal with a make-believe world, the characters and their motivations ring true. What's more, they are fun. Children reading the series know that the things that happen in the books can't really happen to them. Parents aren't killed by wizards, their friends won't become petrified or be chased by giant spiders. Children who feel helpless in an adult world, at the mercy of parents and teachers, identify with Harry's magical ability to overcome problems. He's a good and loyal friend. He treats girls as equals. And he loves knowledge, even if it's only witchcraft. In spite of dead parents and dreadful relatives making his life miserable, Harry isn't a victim, co-dependent, or psychologically damaged in any way. He does not suffer any personality disorders, single or multiple. He is positive about life.

Such children's literature is rare. While unpacking boxes of books for an elementary school book fair, I noticed that the only child as happy, healthy and well-adjusted as Harry was Helen Keller. ■

When Hope Dies



Continued from page 38

huge swastika on it. She comes to her senses only as her 10-year-old sister is helping burn down a synagogue, which barbecues three of her neo-Nazi friends, blinding one of them, killing another.

Convinced that God hates her, she is abused by her senile, religious fanatic grandmother who knows about her secret love for the Captain, a 70-year-old man hiding his past, who makes Lexi's body "flame up like pine patch" whenever she thinks of him. She eventually winds up going Appalachia to cheer up.

There, Lexi meets the three Sautelaire children, whose parents died when their house burned to the ground. They are now in the custody of a morally depraved cousin trying to steal

their money, and who makes them wear ugly, itchy clothing. Brian, once lost in the woods for 54 days, reacts so violently to civilization that he returns to the woods. Josh is running away from the memory of his dead brother and rescuing a bear cub, whose mother was shot by his drunken father. And 12-year-old Maggie is being molested. Her Guardian Angel listens to her when no one else will, even on bad hair days.

She turns to her friend Raina, 16, pregnant and abused by her violent, drug-addicted mother. When her boyfriend is killed and her younger brother dies, Raina winds up living on the streets, addicted to heroin. Her older brother works for the local drug dealer. She sees him killed in a gang-related drive-by shooting. Although her

mother never let her have a pet, she's thrilled that her least favorite brother morphed into an elegant white poodle. To get her life in order, she joins the Cheetah Girls rock group, because, as she says, "They're spicier than hot sauce, and as cool as iced cappuccino." One day she sees her baby picture on a milk carton, discovers she was kidnapped at age 3, and has real parents somewhere out there. This was all unnecessary!

What's more, as Janna knows, none of this matters. Bald and sick from fallout, she worries about her ability to get a date, even as she realizes that the radioactive leak from a nearby power plant that has already killed 18,000 people will eventually kill her and everyone else. ■

Scary Kid Stuff

By Beth Birnbaum



TERRY LABAN

WHEN KIDS ARE LITTLE, parents painstakingly choose books for content and quality. But that oversight goes out the window when they hit school and learn to read for themselves. Then, so the theory goes, anything children read, even if it's garbage, is better than nothing.

The primary series of books advanced by the read-anything proponents (principals, teachers and librarians) at my kids' elementary school, P.S. 101 in Queens, is *Goosebumps*, a franchise created by R.L. Stine. *Goosebumps* are scary because they turn everyday, commonplace events into vicious, supernatural horrors. Numbering more than 200, these plot-by-numbers books are churned out by ghost writers who feed off of childhood fears. Indeed, kids send in their nightmares to be turned into story lines, giving the series a steady supply of psychologically true trauma.

For children who prefer true drama, an endless number of books reinforce television as the ultimate reality. Novelizations of *Full House*, *The Olsen Twins*, *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Dawson's Creek* multiply with each new television season. Jerry Springer or salacious reports on the 10 o'clock news have apparently inspired the plots of other books. Erika Tamar in *Fair Game* tells the story of a high school gang rape of a handicapped girl. The reviewer for the American Library Association noted, "While [Tamar] might have laid her message down more subtly, it would certainly not have made as strong an impact, especially among

Continued on page 37

When Hope Dies

**An exclusive excerpt
from the next children's best-seller**

This is the story of a group of kids who have all grown up together. They think they know everything about one another, but they're only beginning to find out the truth.

Weldon, 18, wakes up in a hospital with his right foot, front teeth and bowel control gone, under arrest for killing two people and injuring his girlfriend while driving drunk. At a juvenile detention facility awaiting trial, he uncovers the warden's secret.

His injured girlfriend, Billie Jo, is no stranger to tragedy. When her pregnant mother accidentally boiled kerosene instead of water, Billie Jo threw the burning

pot out of the house, setting Ma on fire. Putting the fire out with her hands has hurt her ability to play the piano. ("The doctor cut away the skin on my hands so it hung in crested strips; he poked my hands with pins to see what I could feel.") Billie Jo couldn't look at her mother because she smells like scorched meat. She doesn't even have a face. After Ma dies giving birth, her infant brother dies while her father is still out drinking, so she runs away.

Meanwhile, across town, Lexi, angered by her father's moving away and her mother turning into a drunken slut, shaves her head, and tattoos a

Also continued on page 37